This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

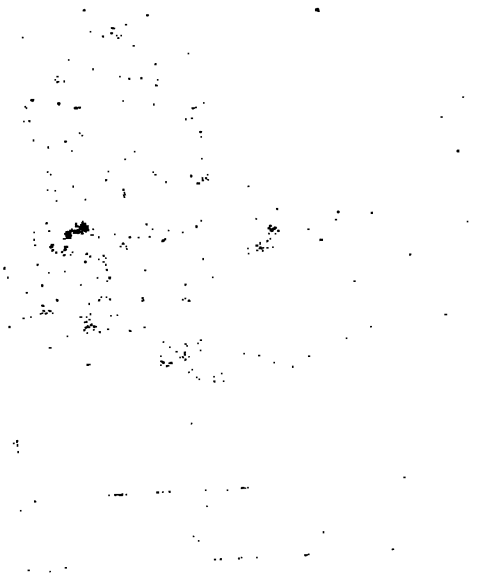
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

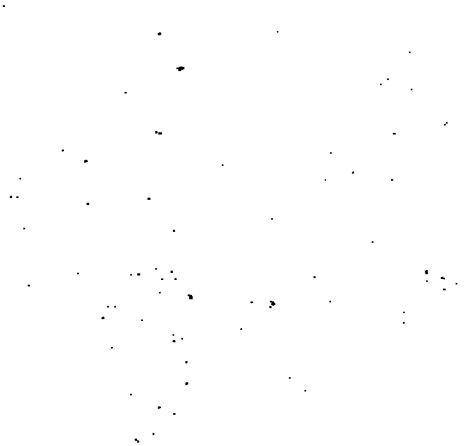
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

Come up after me for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel."

"Come up after me for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel."





THE BATTLES OF THE BIBLE

We sat in the evenings on the grass before the door, while grandfather seated in his garden chair talked to us so seriously, so earnestly, and so kindly

EDINBURGH:
PATON & RITCHIE.

Schenck & Mc Farlane Lith.rs Edin.r

THE

BATTLES OF THE BIBLE.

BY

A CLERGYMAN'S DAUGHTER,

AUTHORESS OF "CHAPTERS ON THE SHORTER CATECHISM."

EDINBURGH:

PATON AND RITCHIE, HANOVER STREET.

GLASGOW: J. MURRAY, AND J. SMITH & SON.

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.

MDCCCLII.

141. d. 20.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE PATRIARCH AND THE FIVE KINGS	1
THE WILDERNESS	15
THE GREAT GENERAL	32
CONQUEST	49
SUBMISSION AND OPPOSITION	63
DAN AND BENJAMIN	81
THE JUDGES OF ISRAEL	101
GIDEON	116
STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS	134
THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL	154
THE FATHER OF A RACE OF KINGS	174
THE SON OF JESSE ON THE THRONE	192
REBELLION AND SORROW	208
IDOLATRY AND DEFEAT	229
ELISHA	256
THE NIGHT OF ISRAEL	280
THE FALL OF JUDAH	297
THE CONCLUSION	314

PREFACE.

—

THERE is no book like the Bible. From the study of no human composition can the same benefit be derived as from the study of the Word of God. This all acknowledge who believe the Scriptures to be divine. Yet, often is the Sacred Book carelessly perused,—often it is read with far less interest than a narrative of the passing events of the day. By many it is read as a task,—by some it is read as a duty,—there are few, it is to be feared, who regard the reading of it as a pleasure. In order to love the Bible we must learn from it,—we must taste its spirit before we can know its excellence. An attempt has been made in the following pages to point out what

may be learned from some passages in Scripture History, It is not an attempt to express all the lessons we are taught by the warlike scenes the Bible paints; but the desire of the writer is to lead the young, and those who assist them in studying the Holy Book, to study it with a purpose,—with regard to every passage of Sacred Writ to ask themselves, What may I learn from this? That any one may be led by perusing these pages to search the Scriptures with more care and attention than formerly, seems a presumptuous hope; but "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty," and if it please Him, he can make even this little work an instrument of good. The writing of it was undertaken with a desire to glorify Him, and it will accomplish the purpose for which he has permitted it to be written, whatever that purpose may be.

NOVEMBER 1851.

BATTLES OF THE BIBLE.

THE

BATTLES OF THE BIBLE.

THE PATRIARCH AND THE FIVE KINGS.

" I love the sacred Book of God,
No other can its place supply;
It points me to the saints' abode,
It gives me wings, and bids me fly.

" When midst the throng celestial placed,
The bright Original I see,
From which thy sacred page was traced,
Sweet Book, I've no more need of thee.

" But while I'm here, thou shalt supply
His place, and tell me of His love;
I'll read with faith's discerning eye,
And get a taste of joys above."

KELLY.

WELL do I remember the cottage where our grandfather lived. It is many years since I saw it, and I would not wish to see it again, for it will be all changed now, and I could not bear to look upon it different from

what it was; but it is before my eyes as vividly as if at this moment I were there. I see the beech hedge round his garden: how neatly cut it always was. I see the little wicket gate, and the two gean trees that used to bear so plentifully. I see the strawberry beds that we used often to look at so wistfully; and I think I see him yet, kind old man, stooping down to search for a ripe one. Little did we think then, in our heedless healthfulness, what a labour that stooping was to him. I can see his bush of moss roses—the favourite bush it was in all his garden; often I fain would have taken one, but I would not steal from grandfather—not that he would have been angry, but he would have been vexed; and vexed I could not bear to see him.

The first time that I went to my grandfather's cottage was early in summer. My two brothers and I had been ill with hooping cough for some months, and the doctor said it would not go quite away till we had change of air. When George heard this, he at once asked to be allowed to go to grandfather's, for he had been there before, and liked it so much. Our father agreed that he should go, and said that he thought Johnnie too might go, and perhaps I. But my mother said that would not do; it might be very well for the boys, but that I, being a girl, could not go to stay at a place where there was no one to look after me. I thought that having no one to look after me would be the very delight of it, and I was sadly disappointed when I heard my mother say that she could not allow me to go. Yet I did not say anything

to her then; I took a private opportunity of entreating George to speak for me, for I knew that our mother paid more regard to his requests than to mine. It was he who had told me how nice it was to stay at grandfather's, and had made me wish to go there. He did speak for me, and effectually too;—leave was granted. Never can I forget the joy I felt when George bounded into the nursery where Johnnie and I were playing, and cried—"You're to go, Marianne."

Often when we expect much happiness from anything, it disappoints us when we get it; but it was not so with my visit to grandfather. I expected much; but not in the least was I disappointed. It was pleasant to weed in his garden, and to help him to tie up his flowers. It was pleasant to play in the fields with Johnnie, and gather gowans to make necklaces. It was pleasant to climb the fir trees with George, and to swing upon their branches. But what I think were pleasanter to me even then, and are far pleasanter to look back upon now, were the times when we sat in the evenings on the grass before the door, while grandfather, seated in his garden chair, talked to us so seriously, so earnestly, and so kindly;—there never was any one who could talk like grandfather.

I well remember, it was the first Saturday night after we went, we were seated thus, and grandfather was telling us that when we went to bed that night we must remember that the next day was the Sabbath; that our first thoughts in the morning might rise in

prayer to God, asking him to enable us to spend it well; and the first book, he said, that we opened on that day should be the Bible.

"The Bible, grandfather," said George; "that is a very tiresome book to read; I do not like it at all."

"That is not right, George," said grandfather very gravely.

"But I cannot help it, grandfather. I am made to read a chapter every day at home; but I would not think of reading it to myself. It is tiresome to go over the same thing so often."

I never before had seen grandfather look so serious as he did then. I was almost frightened; even George seemed to think that he ought not to have said it, when he looked up in grandfather's face after the words were spoken.

"Do you not weary," he said to George, "of seeing the sun shine day after day? do you not weary of seeing the green fields? and is it not tiresome to take your dinner every day?"

John and I gazed at grandfather when he said this; George looked down confused. Grandfather went on—"You do not tire of partaking in the bounties of Providence day after day, although every day of your life you partake of the same; is it not then wicked to tire of that Book which tells of Him by whom these bounties are lavished so freely on you, and that Book, too, which in itself is the greatest of all the blessings he has bestowed on you."

George did not seem to know very well what to say. I was sorry for him; so I said to grandfather that because he was to be a soldier, he did not care about reading anything except battles and sieges."

"Yes," George said, "that is it; and though there are some battles in the Bible, I know all about them, so I need not read them again."

"I do not think you have read the accounts of them carefully, George, or you would wish to read them again. Can you tell who fought the first battle mentioned in the Bible?"

"Was it Cain and Abel, grandfather?" I asked.

"Nonsense," said George, "that was not a battle; it was David and the Philistines who fought the first."

"No," said grandfather, "we are told of more than one battle long before David was born."

"Surely not long before," said George; "I do not remember anything about it."

"Attend then," said grandfather, "and you shall hear about it."

"But grandfather," I said, "does it do us any good to hear about battles? for I do not like to hear of people killing one another."

"Listen to the story of a battle that I am to tell, Marianne, and see if you can learn anything from it.

"It was two thousand and eighty-three years after the creation, and one thousand nine hundred and twenty-one years before the Christian era, that Abram entered Canaan. He had left his native country, obedient to the command of God; he went out not knowing where, for

little could have been known then by any one of any country except the one they lived in. We know much even of the countries most distant from our own, and there is easy communication now between all parts of the world; but it was not so then. Abram's wife went with him, and his nephew Lot; they all lived together in a country where they were strangers, called the land of Canaan.

"Now Abram and Lot were both rich; they had many cattle and servants, and although they could agree together, their herdsmen could not, so they saw that it would be better to separate. Abram was the elder, and the chief, for he was the head of the family, and he had been specially chosen by God, so he had a right to choose where he would go; but he left the choice to Lot, for those who are really pious consider the pleasure of others more than their own.

"'The land is before thee,' he said, 'choose: if you go to the right hand, then I will go to the left; if you go to the left hand, I will go to the right.'

"Lot looked abroad, and saw that the plain of Sodom was very fertile and well watered. He might have preferred that his kinsman should have the richest pasture, but Lot did what most men would have done, consulted what seemed to him his own interest. He went to live in Sodom, and the consequences shew what a short way we can see before us, and how little we know what is for our good even in worldly things.

"For twelve years the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah had been tributary to a king of Elam or Persia, called in

the Bible, Chederlaomer. Either this king is not mentioned in history at all, or he is mentioned by another name. By some he is thought to have been the same with a king of Assyria called Ninyas. But whatever his other name was, or whether he had another or not, he seems to have been a very powerful monarch. In the thirteenth year the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, with other three kings, rebelled against this king of Elam. In course of time he came to make war against these five kings, and he brought with him to assist him three kings, who may either have been his allies or his tributaries, or, as some think, they might be deputies appointed by him over the provinces he had conquered. The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fell in the battle. Chederlaomer gained the victory. He took many prisoners and much spoil from the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot was among the prisoners, and his goods among the spoil. One who had escaped went and told Abram of this, and speedily Abram prepared an army to rescue his kinsman. His army consisted of trained servants born in his own house: he had three hundred and eighteen of them, and he had three friends who assisted him called Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre."

"But how could he think of fighting against four kings with so few men?" George asked.

"He not only thought of it, but he tried it, and succeeded. He divided his small army, and attacked them by night. He defeated them, so that they fled before him; four kings with their armies fled before Abram

and his servants. He took from them the prisoners and the goods that they had taken away. On his return from this victory he was welcomed by a great person, Melchisedek, King of Salem, Priest of the Most High God. He was a type of Christ, as the apostle explains in the epistle to the Hebrews. The name Melchisedek means righteous king, or king of righteousness. Salem means peace; it is the same place as Jerusalem, which means a vision of peace. This kingly priest blessed Abram, and said,—'Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.' This teaches us that if in anything success attend us we ought to give to God all the glory, and assume no credit to ourselves. Abram shewed his thankfulness to the God who had given him success by giving to his priest the tenth part of all the spoil.

"Then the king of Sodom advanced, and offered to give Abram the goods, on condition that he would give to him the people whom he had rescued. Abram said that he would take not the smallest thing, lest the king of Sodom might say, 'I have made Abram rich.' So he restored the people and all the goods to the king, except a portion for his three friends, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; for he knew that those who had served him, although they did not serve him for payment, ought to be rewarded when it was in his power. This teaches us a lesson of justice and of gratitude,—to give to all that which is their due; and to shew by our actions that we are grateful to those who have obliged us.

"So Lot got home again, and all his goods with him."

"You said, grandfather," said George, "that Lot's choice brought misfortunes upon him, but they all ended well."

"But further and greater misfortunes came upon him; they did not come by a battle, so that you would not care to hear them."

"Oh yes, grandfather, tell them."

"The people of Sodom were a very wicked people; they had been warned to turn from their wickedness by the invasion of Chederlaomer, but that warning they did not improve. The wisest of men says, 'He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy.' So it was with the people of Sodom. That their destruction was near, the Lord made known to Abraham, for Abram's name was now changed into Abraham, which means a father of many nations. When the Lord intimated to him that Sodom for its wickedness was to be destroyed, Abraham pleaded that the righteous be spared, and that if in the city there were fifty such, the place for their sake might be preserved. The Lord replied, that if in the city there were fifty righteous he would not destroy it. Abraham said that five might be awanting of the fifty, would the Lord destroy it for the want of five? The Lord replied, that for the sake of forty-five righteous he would not destroy it. Again Abraham pleaded there might be forty there. Again the merciful God replied, 'I will not do it for forty's sake.'

"'Oh let not the Lord be angry,' Abraham said, 'there may be thirty there.'

"The Lord said, 'I will not do it if I find thirty there.'

"'Behold now,' Abraham said, 'I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, peradventure there shall twenty be found there.'

"The Lord said, 'I will not destroy it for twenty's sake.'

"'Oh let not the Lord be angry,' Abraham said, 'and I will speak but this once, peradventure ten shall be found there.'

"The Lord said, 'I will not do it for ten's sake.'

"We may learn much from this. When Abraham prayed for the people of Sodom he taught us that we ought not to rejoice in the sufferings of any, and that we ought to pray for all. In the Almighty granting all his requests, we see the power of prayer. Abraham wearied of asking, before the Lord wearied of giving what he asked. In the promise given by God to spare the city of Sodom for the sake of ten righteous, if there were as many in it, we see what a blessing it is to a place to have those in it who fear the Lord.

"We shall now go to Sodom. It was evening, and Lot sat in the gate of the city. He saw two strangers approaching of a very different aspect from the low and vicious inhabitants of the place. He bowed before them, and offered them refreshment in his house, and lodging for the night. They at first refused his offer, saying

that they would stay in the street all night; but he pressed them greatly, and they went in. Then the people of the place came demanding the strangers. Lot went out to speak to them, but they listened not to him; they pressed upon him, and nearly broke the door. His guests then drew Lot in to them, and smote the people outside with blindness, so that they could not find the door. The angels—for Lot's visitors were not mortals —told him now to collect his family and flee from this place, for the Lord had sent them to destroy it. Lot told his sons-in-law, but they did not heed; it seemed a jest to them.

"The morning dawned. 'Arise, take thy wife and thy two daughters which are here,' the angels said to Lot. He lingered, unwilling, it may be, to leave all his riches behind him. They kindly took his hand and led him away.

"'Escape,' they said, 'to the mountain; stay not in all the plain, lest thou be consumed.' Lot entreated leave to go into the city of Bela, which was near, thinking himself not able to go to the mountain, as if the God who had saved him out of Sodom could not give him strength for the journey he had commanded him to take. But God was merciful; his petition was granted; for his sake the city was spared; and because he had pleaded its being little, as a reason for its not being destroyed, it was called Zoar, which means a little one. On the way, Lot's wife looked back from behind him, and for that she died. Some of the fiery particles that were in the air

fell on her, and crusted over her body, so that she became like a pillar of salt.

"There was not very much harm in only looking back, grandfather," I said, "why was she punished so very much?"

"In looking back she disobeyed a positive command of God, and in looking back from behind Lot she shewed that she had more regard to her husband's approbation than to the approbation of God. She did not wish Lot to know that she was doing wrong; she did not care though God knew it. The fate which befel her teaches us to fear God rather than man.

"Then the Lord rained fire and brimstone upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah, so that fertile plain, where many people and many cattle had dwelt, was changed into a place where nothing could live."

"What like is the place now, grandfather?" George asked.

"It is a lake called the Dead Sea, a large lake about forty miles in length and eighteen in breadth. The waters of it are very salt, as some one says they taste like fire. Nothing that lives or breathes is to be found in them, and they are the only waters in the world of which that can be said. Travellers have told that they could see pillars and fragments of buildings under the clear waters, but that is not necessary to prove the truth of the story I have told you. Some have supposed that the soil of the fertile plain of Sodom was partly composed of a very combustible material; that it rested on

a mass of subterranean water, and that lightning kindling the ground, the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah fell into the abyss. Others have thought that there was an earthquake caused by fire underneath the ground, which attracted the lightning, and so consumed the cities. But whatever the soil may have been, we know for certain that the Cities of the Plain, for their sins, were destroyed by fire from heaven, and that their destruction is a type of the everlasting destruction of the wicked in the 'lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.' We are warned to 'flee from the wrath to come.' The fate of Lot's sons-in-law teaches us not to neglect that warning. The fate of Lot himself teaches us to choose for our friends and associates those that fear God. 'He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but the companion of fools shall have poverty enough.'"

Grandfather then asked us some questions, to see if we had remembered the lessons we were to draw from what he had been telling us. These are the questions he asked:—

"What do we learn from Abram leaving to Lot the choice of his abode?

"What do we learn from the blessing with which Melchisedek blessed Abram?

"What does Abram's conduct to his three friends teach us?

"When Abraham prayed for the people of Sodom, what did he teach us?

" What does the granting of all his requests shew to us?

" What are we shewn from the promise given by God to spare the city if ten righteous could be found in it?

" What does the fate of Lot's wife teach us?

" Of what is the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah a type?

" What are we taught by the fate of Lot's sons-in-law?

" What do we learn from the fate of Lot himself?"

THE WILDERNESS.

" When Israel, of the Lord belov'd,
Out from the land of bondage came,
Her father's God before her mov'd,
An awful guide, in smoke and flame.
By day along the astonish'd lands
The cloudy pillar glided slow;
By night Arabia's crimson'd sands
Return'd the fiery column's glow.
There rose the choral hymn of praise,
And trump and timbrel answer'd keen;
And Zion's daughters pour'd their lays,
With priests' and warriors' voice between."

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE next morning the first thing George and I did was to get our grandfather's Bible, and read the account of the battle with the kings, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. We went to church with grandfather, and we had to leave very early, for we had a good way to go, and grandfather was not very able to walk. When we came home again we learned catechism and verses, and said them to grandfather. George was grumbling at having that to do, but not aloud, for he would not have liked grandfather to hear him; but grandfather explained them so nicely to us, that he made even them interesting. George then asked grandfather to tell us

about another battle. Grandfather said he would, but first would ask us some more questions about the one he had told us of the day before. We were able to answer all that he asked us; so he said he was pleased, and would go on to the next. I asked if Abraham had fought any more battles?

"We do not hear of any more fought by him. It was many years after his death that the next one mentioned in the Bible was fought. It was two thousand five hundred and thirteen years after the creation of the world, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-one years before the Christian era. The Lord had brought out of Egypt the children of Israel, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were brought out with many miracles; signs and wonders were done in the land of Ham."

"What was the land of Ham?" Johnnie asked.

"Egypt, to be sure," said George.

"Was Ham the king of Egypt?" Johnnie next inquired.

"No, Pharaoh was the king of Egypt."

"Who was Ham then?" said Johnnie.

But George could not answer that, nor could I, although I was sure that I had heard of Ham before.

"He was the youngest son of Noah," grandfather said, "and Egypt was called the land of Ham because the Egyptians were descended from him. The Israelites were now freed from the tyranny of Pharoah—they were in the wilderness."

"Were there many of them, grandfather?" George asked.

Grandfather. A great many. The Lord had told Abraham that his descendants should be as the sand on the seashore—innumerable. At that time Abraham had no child; two hundred and fifteen years after, his descendants by Isaac, the son of the promise, were seventy souls; two hundred and fifteen years after that, four hundred and thirty years after the promise was given, they were six hundred thousand fighting men—in all nearly three millions of people. In the wilderness of Arabia, where they journeyed, there was neither food nor water. The Lord provided them with food by a miraculous supply of manna. When they felt the want of water the people murmured against Moses, saying that he had brought them up out of Egypt to kill them and their cattle with thirst. It was wicked in the people to do this; they ought to have prayed to God; he had provided them with food, and was as able to supply them with water. Moses cried to God, and God told him to smite a rock, and, to encourage him, said that He would be there before him, and that when the rock was smitten, water would come out of it. Moses did this, and the water gushed out. Some think that the stream which then flowed from the rock accompanied the Israelites on their journey all through the wilderness, and supplied them with water. Want of water is mentioned again, but not till very many years after that. Travellers who have seen the rock that Moses struck at this

time, take notice of the channel made by the waters, and the number of holes seeming as if they were so many fountains; but no water runs from them now. The apostle Paul, speaking of that rock, tells us that it followed them, and that it was a type of Christ. It was a good type, for He is firm as a rock to those that trust in him. All who build their hopes in Him are building on a sure foundation: all who build on anything else are trying to make houses of sand. He is a fountain opened in the house of David for sin and for uncleanness. The fountains we hew out to ourselves are broken cisterns which can hold no water; whoever drinks of the water given by him shall never thirst.

But we must come to the battle now. Immediately after this, the Amalekites came against the Israelites. Moses told Joshua to choose men and go to fight against Amalek; as for himself, he said that he would go to the top of the hill with the rod of God in his hand. So while Joshua fought, Moses prayed. It must have been a great encouragement to the Israelites in this their first battle to see Joshua in the field fighting for them, and Moses on the hill praying for them. When Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed; when he let down his hands Amalek prevailed. When he grew tired, Aaron and Hur, who were both on the hill with him, took a stone and placed it for him to sit on, and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on each side of him, which kept his hands steady. So Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the sword. Then the Lord told Moses to

write this in a book, for that the remembrance of Amalek was to be put out from under heaven. This is the first mention we find of writing in the Bible. The Amalekites were descendants of Esau, and ought to have had a more kindly feeling to the children of Jacob. Sometimes the nearest of kin are the bitterest foes; so the sons of Esau were the first enemies whom the sons of Jacob encountered in the wilderness. Because Amalek was overcome when fighting against the Lord's chosen, we learn that all who may attempt to resist the will of God must be forced to yield to Him: because Moses, when he prayed, brought victory to his people, so if we look to God for strength, it will be given according as we need it.

Then grandfather ceased speaking, and told us that this was the end of the second battle in the Bible. We all asked him to tell us about another, so he went on.

Grandfather. About a year and a half after this the Israelites had arrived at the borders of the promised land. They chose spies to send in before them to examine the country, and bring them a report of it. There were twelve spies—one from each tribe—and they were forty days in examining the land; they went through it from one end to the other.

Johnnie asked grandfather if the people did not wonder at so many men going about in their country.

Grandfather. We are not told what the natives thought, but we know that they did not do any harm to them, for the spies returned in safety. They brought pomegranates and figs, and a bunch of grapes so large

that they carried it between two men on a staff. The brook that it had grown beside was called Eshcol, which means a bunch of grapes. They shewed these fruits to the people, and told them that surely it was a land flowing with milk and honey. "But," they said, "the cities are walled, and the people are strong that dwell in them, and we have seen the children of Anak there." The children of Anak were of the race of the giants. Caleb, the spy of the tribe of Judah, said, "Let us go up at once and possess the land, for we are able to overcome it." Joshua, the spy of the tribe of Ephraim, said the same. But they were only two; the other ten spies said that they could not go up against this people, for they were stronger than they. They said that the land ate up its inhabitants, and that when they saw the giants, the sons of Anak, there, they seemed to themselves like grasshoppers, which are feeble and timid creatures.

George. Were not they very cowardly, grandfather, when there were so many of them?

Grandfather. They were very cowardly: six hundred thousand men might have been able to do a great deal; but it was not so much their number that should have made them fearless, as the remembrance of what God had done for them. He had delivered them, a host of slaves, from the tyranny of the powerful king of Egypt. He had miraculously supplied them with bread and water in the midst of a barren desert. They knew not a step of the way to Canaan. He had guided them by a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. Then,

when the Lord had promised that they would be able to subdue the land, it was doubting the truth of His word to fancy that they could not do it.

Marianne. What did they mean, grandfather, when they said that the land ate up its inhabitants?

Grandfather. They might mean that the inhabitants by their wars destroyed one another, or, it is more probable that a pestilence was raging at the time, and instead of regarding it as providential, to lessen the number of their enemies, they murmured at it as if it were always there. And all the people wept that night, and said, they wished they had stayed in Egypt or in the wilderness; and they said to one another, "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt."

Johnnie. What could they have done in Egypt, grandfather?

Grandfather. They did not know that themselves, I daresay; it was madness to think of going there; they could not hope for mercy from the Egyptians, and they could not expect the blessing of God upon an act of disobedience. When Moses and Aaron heard this, they fell on their faces before the assembled people, for they were unable to speak, and might not have been listened to even if they had spoken. Then Caleb and Joshua, the two good spies, rent their clothes, and spoke to the assembled people in these words:—"The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us—a land which floweth

with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not." Caleb and Joshua spoke thus at the hazard of their lives. They stood alone in opposition to the whole multitude; many hundred thousands of enraged men were against them. This shews us how fearless they are who know they have the Lord on their side.

Marianne. But were the people wicked enough to touch them, grandfather?

Grandfather. Yes, they were preparing to stone them to death, but the glory of the Lord appeared in the Tabernacle, so that they did not dare to do it; they were awed by the sight. The Lord did not interfere when they were murmuring against Him, but when they threatened the lives of His faithful servants, he appeared for their defence. This shews us that "them that honour Him, He will honour." The Lord then told Moses that he would destroy this people with the pestilence, and would make of him a great nation, and mightier than they. This was the second time that this offer had been made to Moses; but he resisted, and pleaded with the Lord to pardon the people according to the greatness of His mercy, saying that the Egyptians and the other heathen nations would hear of their destruction, and would say that the Lord had killed the people in the wilderness, because he was not able to bring them into the land which He had promised. The conduct of Moses sets us

a noble example of disinterestedness; we learn from it that the glory of God should be our end and aim in all our actions and desires.

The Lord returned a gracious answer to the prayer of Moses, "I have pardoned," He said, "according to thy word, but as truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord." All those people who had rebelled were to die in the wilderness, where they must wander till another generation was able to take their place: only Caleb and Joshua, of all who were men at that time, were to enter the promised land.

George. How long would it take till they were all dead?

Grandfather. They were condemned to wander in the wilderness forty years, but that was reckoned from the time they left Egypt, a year and a half before. As for the ten spies, whose evil advice had caused the people to sin, they died by the plague before the Lord; they were struck down in the presence of the congregation. So when the people tried to kill the two good men, the Lord appeared to save them: when no one tried to kill the ten wicked men, the Lord came to destroy them. This shews us that if the Lord is not on our side the support of man can avail us little. Then the people, being alarmed by the fate of the spies, repented when it was too late, and said that they would now go up to possess the land. Moses told them not to go, because the Lord was not with them, but they would not listen to him; they went, and were defeated by the Canaanites

and Amalekites, and pursued as far as to Hormah. Such is the fate of all attempts on which the blessing of God does not rest.

George. But, grandfather, sometimes bad men win in battle.

Grandfather. Sometimes bad men are instruments in the hand of God to punish the people they are fighting against.

George. But when they are fighting against good people, the bad sometimes gain.

Grandfather. Then it may be to try those good people, to teach them to trust in God more entirely. We do not hear of any more battles fought by the Israelites till thirty-eight years after this. During all that time they wandered in the wilderness: when it expired, they drew near the borders of the promised land.

Johnnie. Had not they to wander forty years, grandfather?

Grandfather. Yes, forty years from the time they left Egypt, but a year and a half of the time had passed before the spies were sent to search the land; and now all the people who then rebelled against God being dead, they advanced. Arad, king of the Canaanites, who dwelt in the south part of the land, heard that they were coming by the same way the spies had come; he fought against them—against some small parties of them, probably, who were separated from the main army, and took some of them prisoners.

George. That would make them turn again.

Grandfather. No, it did not, for a better spirit was among them at this time. They prayed to God that He would deliver the Canaanites into their hands, and vowed that if their prayer was granted they would utterly destroy the cities of that heathen people. Their prayer was granted, and their vow was performed. They destroyed the cities of the Canaanites, and from that the name of the place was called Hormah, which means utter destruction.

Marianne. Did not you tell us of a place before that was called Hormah, grandfather?

George. Yes, it was the place to which the Canaanites and Amalekites pursued the Israelites when they fought against them thirty-eight years before. Was that the same Hormah as this, grandfather?

Grandfather. It was the same place, but it did not receive its name till after the utter destruction of the Canaanites. Although it was not known by the name of Hormah at the time the Canaanites pursued the Israelites thither, it was known by that name at the time the account of the Israelites' defeat was written. So the same place was memorable to the Israelites by a defeat and a victory,—a defeat, because they trusted in themselves—a victory, because they trusted in God. This teaches us a lesson that we are often taught in the Bible, that man is weak in himself, but strong when trusting in God. After this the people journeyed by way of the Red Sea, to go round the land of Edom,

which made the way much longer; but they were obliged to do it, for the king of Edom would not let them pass through his land.

George. Why did they not force their way through?

Grandfather. Because God forbade them to do that, for the Edomites were the descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob.

Marianne. Did they ask leave to go through the land of Edom?

Grandfather. They did, and promised to keep on the highway, and to pay for everything they needed; but the Edomites refused permission, and assembled an army to prevent them. It lengthened the journey of the Israelites, and the people were wearied, and murmured against God and against Moses, and said that they had been brought up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness. It was very wicked in them to speak so, when they had been miraculously preserved for so many years. The food that had been so wonderfully provided for them they found fault with, and said that their soul loathed it. This wickedness called for punishment. The Lord sent fiery serpents, and they bit the people, which caused many of them to die. These fiery serpents are very common both in Egypt and Arabia. They are short, spotted with different colours, and have wings like a bat. Their bite is very dangerous. There is no mention made before this of the Israelites being infested with them, although they are so common there. The Lord had hitherto kept these dangerous

creatures from hurting them, and would have done so at this time, had they not sinfully murmured. This trial humbled the people. They confessed their sin, and besought forgiveness, that the serpents might be taken away. Moses prayed for them. The Lord told him to make a brazen serpent, and put it on a pole, and any one that was bitten, when he looked on it would live. Moses did so, and it was as the Lord had said.

Johnnie. But, grandfather, what good could looking at the brazen serpent do to them?

Grandfather. It could not of itself have done any good to them, but rather the contrary; for we are told by some that when one has been bitten by those fiery serpents, if he look upon brass the wound is aggravated. But to look upon a serpent made of brass was the cure appointed by God, and it is in his power to cure by any means, however unlikely they may seem to produce the desired effect, or to cure without any means, if it so please him. The brazen serpent was a type of Christ; we are told so by our blessed Saviour himself. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so shall the Son of Man be lifted up." Sin is the serpent that has bitten us; if we try to cure ourselves we shall not succeed, but if we look to Jesus, trusting in him, we shall be saved. We must remember that as the brazen serpent could not cure any save those who looked to it, so unless we come to Jesus our sins will not be forgiven for his name's sake. But this is not a battle. I must hasten on to the next one mention-

ed in the Bible. The Israelites had now arrived at the border of the land of Sihon, the Amorite, king of Heshbon. They sent to ask him to let them pass through his land, engaging to do no harm to anything, and to keep on the highway. Sihon, like the Edomites, refused permission, and raised an army; not only did he do that, but marched out into the wilderness against the Israelites.

George. I hope they beat him.

Grandfather. They did; they smote him with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land. He himself had taken it a short time before from a king of Moab. Sihon little thought when he took possession of the land by conquest, that he must soon resign it to the people to whom it rightfully belonged, the people to whom it had been promised many hundreds of years before by Him to whom all lands belong. The Israelites speedily encountered another enemy. Og, king of Bashan, marched out at the head of an army to fight against them. He was a powerful king; he reigned over no fewer than sixty fortified cities, besides many unwalled towns. In his own person he was a very formidable opponent, for he was a giant. We are not told his height, but judging from the length of his bed, it must have been immense. His bedstead was made of iron, and was nine cubits long, and four cubits broad. Reckoning a cubit at half a yard, it would be four yards and a half long, double the length of an ordinary bed. When this king marched against the Israelites, the

Lord appeared to Moses to strengthen him, telling him not to fear, for that he had delivered Og into his hand. So the people of Israel smote the giant and his people till none were left alive, and got possession of the fertile territory of Bashan, famous for its oaks, its bulls, and its rams. They had now conquered all that part of Palestine which lies to the east of the Jordan, and having done so, they divided it into three parts. Reuben, you know, was the eldest son of Jacob, his descendants got one part; another portion was allotted to the Gadites, who were descended from Gad, the seventh son of Jacob; and the third division was given to half of the tribe of Manasseh, the eldest son of Joseph. We now come to the prophet Balaam, of whom, I daresay, you have heard before.

"Yes, grandfather," we said, "but we do not know his history very well, we would like to hear it again."

"At another time," grandfather replied, "I may give you all the particulars of his remarkable history, at present I shall only tell you as much of it as is necessary to know in order to understand the battle with which it is connected. Balak, king of Moab, promised Balaam great gifts and honours if he would prophesy against the children of Israel. Balaam, covetous and ambitious as he was, could not do this. He who formed the tongue overruled his, so that he could only prophesy good of the chosen people. Then the wicked prophet advised the people of Moab and Midian to tempt the children of Israel to idolatry. In this they succeeded

only too well; the Israelites bowed down before strange gods. To punish this wickedness, the Lord sent a plague upon them, of which twenty-four thousand of them died. The Moabites were descendants of Lot, and the Midianites were descendants of Abraham, so they might have escaped the destruction to which the Canaanites and Amorites were doomed; but they did not escape—their own conduct brought ruin upon them. The Lord said to Moses, "Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites." They were to be avenged of them because they had led them into sin. We ought to regard those as our worst enemies who seek to tempt us to do what is wrong. It is a greater injury than robbing or wounding us, for the soul is more noble than the body."

Grandfather then stopped, telling us he would leave the battle with the Midianites till the next day. We talked about Balaam and his ass, and Johnnie was very anxious to hear about them, so grandfather bade us get our Bibles, and read aloud the twenty-second, twenty-third, and twenty-fourth chapters of Numbers. He explained it to us as we went on.

From a rock in the wilderness the Israelites were supplied with water—Why was that rock a type of Christ?

The prayers of Moses brought victory to the Israelites—What does this teach us?

Caleb and Joshua stood alone against the multitude—What do we learn from this?

When their lives were threatened, the Lord came down to preserve them—What does this shew us?

What do we learn from the conduct of Moses at this time?

What are we taught by the fate of the ten spies?

Hormah was memorable by a defeat of the Israelites and by a victory of the Israelites—What does this teach us?

Fiery serpents bit the Israelites—Of what were they a type?

Of whom was the brazen serpent a type?

Whom ought we to regard as our worst enemies?

THE GREAT GENERAL.

" 'Tis not the law of ten commands,
  On holy Sinai given,
Or sent to men by Moses' hands,
  Can bring us safe to heaven.

" 'Tis not the blood which Aaron spilt,
  Nor smoke of sweetest smell,
Can buy a pardon for our guilt,
  Or save our souls from hell.

" Aaron the priest resigns his breath
  At God's immediate will,
And in the desert yields to death
  Upon the appointed hill.

" And thus on Jordan's yonder side,
  The tribes of Israel stand,
While Moses bow'd his head and died,
  Short of the promis'd land.

" Israel rejoice, now Joshua leads,
  He'll bring your tribes to rest,
For far the Saviour's name exceeds
  The ruler and the priest."

WATTS.

WEARIED of play, and tired of romping, it was very gladly that we seated ourselves by our grandfather's side on the following evening, to hear the story of the

battle with the Midianites. We reminded him of his promise, and he at once began.

Grandfather. The Midianites were, as I think I told you before, descended from Abraham; they took their name from Midian, the fourth son of Abraham and Keturah. Some of them had settled to the south of Canaan, and had continued to worship the true God. Moses lived among them for forty years, and his wife was one of them. These, with whom the Israelites were now to fight, lived to the east of Canaan, and were idolaters. It was by the special command of God that the Israelites entered into this war. He had punished his own people for yielding to the temptations of the Midianites, and now the Midianites, who were the tempters, must meet the punishment they deserved. The Lord told Moses that after the children of Israel were avenged on the Midianites, he was to be gathered to his fathers; his work in this world would be ended, so he must leave it.

George. Did all the men who could fight go against the Midianites?

Grandfather. No, only one thousand from every tribe, twelve thousand in all, for that was the number commanded by God. With them went the son of Eleazar the High Priest, who was called Phinehas; he had already made himself famous by killing two of the chief offenders when the Israelites were seduced to worship strange Gods. The Lord rewarded him for that by a promise that the priesthood should remain in his family.

George. But twelve thousand was a very small army.

Grandfather. But the God of armies was with them, and they killed the whole host of the Midianites; the five kings of Midian were killed, and it was at this time that Balaam, the son of Beor, was slain. Whatever was the cause of his being there, he deserved the death he met with. Had he believed what he himself said about the happy death of the righteous, he would not have gone among the wicked to die their death. The Israelites then burnt the Midianites' cities, and their goodly castles, which some think were their idol temples. They took the women and children, the cattle and goods, to their camp. Moses was much displeased with them for saving the lives of the women, because they were the instruments who had been used to seduce the people to idolatry, so he gave orders that they should be killed. The spoil was then divided into two parts: one part was given to the twelve thousand who had gone to the battle, the other was given to the whole congregation.

Marianne. That was not at all an equal division, grandfather.

Grandfather. No, but it was right that those who had run the greatest risks should receive the greatest rewards. Out of the soldiers' half the five-hundredth part was to be given to the High Priest, and out of the people's half a fiftieth part was to be given to the Levites. What was paid to the priests and Levites was considered as a tribute to the Lord. The people who had staid in the camp had the larger contribution to pay,

which teaches us that "the less we have opportunity of honouring God with our personal services, the more it is expected we honour him with our substance."

George. You said the twelve thousand got a half, grandfather. The twelve thousand could not have been nearly all there. How many of them were killed?

Grandfather. Not one; they all returned in safety, and, as an acknowledgment of the Almighty's gracious protection, the officers presented of the spoil they had taken, the valuable jewels and gold ornaments as a thank-offering to the Lord. We learn from this, that of everything we receive we ought to bestow a part on religious purposes.

George. I did not think the Midianites would have had any jewels or gold ornaments. What sort of people were they?

Grandfather. They were a wandering people, who may be divided into two classes,—shepherds, who moved up and down in tents, driving their cattle before them, and merchants, who travelled from place to place in companies. They were a wealthy people, and their riches brought luxury among them, so that they were remarkable for riot and excess.

Marianne. And did Moses die after the battle?

Grandfather. He did, and the circumstances of his death are very remarkable. He went up to the top of Mount Pisgah. There the Lord shewed him all the promised land—all its extent, and all its beauty—and after having seen that sight, the great lawgiver laid

himself down to die. No human being was near him, but God saw him die. There was no friend to pay the last honours to his remains; but his was the grandest burial that ever was in this earth, for it was the Lord who buried him. Forty years of his life Moses passed at the court of Pharoah, forty in the land of Midian feeding his father-in-law's flocks, and forty years he was in the wilderness of Arabia, the leader and lawgiver of his brethren, the children of Israel. He was a hundred and twenty years old when he died.

Johnnie. What an old man he was!

George. He was not old at all. Adam, and Methuselah, and Noah, and these people, lived eight or nine times as long.

Grandfather. Yes, they did: for several reasons that was an advantage. One might be this, that when the earth was so thinly peopled, and the means of acquiring instruction were so few, it was desirable that men should have a long time to gain knowledge, and a long time to communicate it. But though the early patriarchs lived to so great ages, in the days of Moses people did not live longer than they do now. His life was reckoned a long one for his time, yet none of the infirmities of age were upon him. The successor of Moses, as leader of the people of Israel, was Joshua, the son of Nun, whom I mentioned to you before. When the spies were sent in to search the land of Canaan, he was the spy from the tribe of Ephraim.

George. You mentioned him another time, grand-

father. He was general in one of the battles they fought.

Grandfather. I am glad to see that you remember so well. He was their leader when they fought against the Amalekites. Joshua is the same name as Jesus; they both mean Saviour. Joshua was a type of Christ; as he led the chosen people into Canaan, the land promised to their fathers, so the Captain of our Salvation will bring his own people safe into the heavenly Canaan, our land of promise. It was an important task that was given to Joshua to perform. We may suppose him anxious and thoughtful. He had not the wonder-working power of Moses, and the people, he might think, would not have the same confidence in him that they had in that great prophet. But when the Lord has a work to be done, he can give strength to the instrument who is to do it. He spake to Joshua, telling him, that as he had been with Moses, so would he be with him—"I will not fail thee; nor forsake thee." At that time the promise was repeated to Joshua, that the Israelites should possess all the land of Canaan, and the gracious Promiser tells Joshua to meditate on the law by day and by night, that he might know it and obey it, and so his way would be prosperous, and he would have good success. This shows us the only way in which we ought to seek for prosperity, which is keeping the commandments of God, and doing his will. The address given by the Almighty to his servant Joshua at this time ends with these encouraging words, "Be strong and of a

good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

We come now to one of the most remarkable sieges that the world ever saw, the siege of Jericho. Jericho was a city about seven leagues from Jerusalem, and two leagues from the Jordan. Joshua, before commencing the attack, sent two spies secretly to make observations on the city. They were guided by Providence to the house of a woman named Rahab, who it is thought kept a place of entertainment for travellers. She had formerly been a woman of bad character, but was changed now,—so changed that both St Paul and St James have celebrated her as a pattern of piety. This teaches us never to despair of any one, nor to think it too late to repent. While the spies were lodging in this woman's house, the news was brought to the king of Jericho that they had come, and also the errand they came upon. He sent to Rahab to ask her to give them up, for they were come to search out all the country. She took them up to the roof, and hid them under stalks of flax laid out by herself to dry, which shows us that she was an industrious woman. When she had hid them there she went down to speak to the king's messengers. She told them that two men came to her, she knew not from whence; when it grew dark they went away, she knew not where, but if they would follow quickly she thought they might overtake them.

Marianne. That was not true, grandfather; she knew quite well where they were.

Grandfather. No, it was not true. Some have said, as an excuse for Rahab, that some other men may have gone to her house of whom she knew nothing, and they may have left when it became dark. But that is not a sufficient excuse; for though she may not have told a direct falsehood, she certainly spoke with an intention to deceive. We must, however, remember that Rahab was brought up in a heathen country, with a conscience unenlightened by the knowledge of the truth, and so could have had little idea of the sinfulness of a lie, and no idea how hateful all falsehood is to a God of truth. Rahab's motives were good; it was because she believed in the God of Israel that she saved the lives of these men of Israel. When the king's messengers had gone in pursuit as she directed them, Rahab went up to the roof to speak to her guests. "I know," she said to them, "that the Lord hath given you this land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Ogg, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you; for the Lord your God, he is God in Heaven above, and in the earth beneath.

George. How did Rahab know that, when she lived among heathens?

Grandfather. By the wonderful works that the Lord had done, she was led to despise the idols that her countrymen worshipped, and to glorify God in her heart. Therefore she shewed kindness to his servants, and asked them in return to shew kindness to her, by saving her alive along with her father and mother, her brothers and sisters.

Johnnie. But surely they were not thinking of killing her when she had been so good to them.

Grandfather. She did not expect them to kill her then, but she knew that they were coming back to take the city, and she believed that they would put all the inhabitants to death.

Marianne. Did they promise to save her alive and her relations too?

Grandfather. They did; they told her to bring all her father's household into her own house, and engaged that no one who was in that house would be hurt. That they might be certain which house it was, they told her to bind a line of scarlet cord to her window.

George. How did they get away from the town?

Grandfather. Rahab let them out of her window by a piece of scarlet cord, the same which she afterwards bound on the window to secure her own safety. Her house stood on the town wall, so that when they reached the ground they were without the town. She told them to go to the mountain, and to hide themselves there for three days till the pursuers had returned, and then they might go their way. They followed her advice, reached

the camp in safety, and told Joshua all that happened to them; and as a sign that the Lord had delivered the land into their hand, they said that the inhabitants fainted because of them. Early in the morning Joshua rose, and he and all the people of Israel removed from Shittim, the place where they then were, and encamped beside the river Jordan. Before taking Jericho they must cross the Jordan, for they were on the east side of the river, and Jericho is on the west of it.

Johnnie. Was there a bridge across the river, grandfather?

Grandfather. There is no mention made of a bridge, and we have no reason for supposing that there was one, but the contrary.

Johnnie. But could they get across without, was it broad?

Grandfather. It was broad at the season that they were crossing it. It was the time of barley harvest, which in that country is in spring, in the month Abib, which begins about the middle of March. The melting of the snow on the mountains swelled the streams, and caused the Jordan regularly to overflow its banks at that season. Joshua told the priests to take up the ark and go before the people, and he told the people that they were to follow the ark of the covenant of the Lord their God.

Johnnie. Was the ark a large thing, grandfather?

Grandfather. It was two cubits and a half long, a cubit and a half broad, and the same in height. Reckon-

ing a cubit at half a yard, it would be one yard and a quarter long, three quarters of a yard broad, and three quarters of a yard high.

Johnnie. Was it made of wood ?

Grandfather. Yes, but it was overlaid with pure gold inside and outside, and it had two rings of gold on each side, and staves put through the rings to carry it by.

Marianne. Was there anything kept in it ?

Grandfather. There were the two tables of stone on which the ten commandments were written by the finger of God ; there was a golden pot full of manna, kept as a remembrance of the way in which the Lord fed them in the wilderness ; and there was Aaron's wonder-working rod ; all these were kept in the ark of the covenant.

The priests, agreeably to the command given by Joshua, moved towards the river ; they walked to its very edge ; they stepped into it, and as soon as the feet of these priests touched the edge of the water, suddenly the channel of the river was dry, for the waters which were coming down from the sea of Galilee stood and rose up in a heap, so that there was none to flow into the Dead Sea ; the space of sixteen or eighteen miles of the river was thus left dry. The priests walked into the middle of the Jordan ; there they stood firm on dry ground till the whole of the people had passed over in safety. Then twelve stones were erected in Jordan, on the place where the priests had stood, and twelve stones were taken from that place and laid on the ground where the children of Israel encamped that night.

Marianne. What was the use of these stones, grandfather?

Grandfather. They were for a sign to keep in remembrance this great miracle.

Marianne. But surely they would never forget it?

Grandfather. They would remember it better if they saw something to remind them of it, and the stones would attract the attention of children in after times; they would ask the meaning of them, and the people would tell them of the wonderful works that God had wrought, that His great name might be glorified. This teaches us that when the God to whom we owe everything shews us a special favour, we ought to mark it in our memory and speak of it to others. Now, the wilderness where the Israelites wandered for forty years is a type of this world, for we are but strangers and sojourners here. The river Jordan is a type of death, the dark river through which we must pass before we reach the heavenly Canaan, our promised land of rest; and the ark is a type of our blessed Saviour. As it opened a passage for the chosen people through the river Jordan, so He has gone before us and prepared a way in which he leads his people through the dark valley of the shadow of death, as your hymn says, Johnnie,—

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are."

George. Does the Jordan overflow its banks still in the time of harvest?

Grandfather. Travellers who have been there at that season have seen no rise in the river, so it is supposed that it has not overflowed its banks for a considerable number of years; the cause of this is not known. That the river should be so much swollen at the time the Israelites entered Canaan, must have made the miracle wrought in their behalf the more striking, not only in their eyes, but also in the eyes of the heathen inhabitants of Jericho, who saw from their walls the dividing of the Jordan that their enemies might pass through.

Marianne. They must have been very much afraid.

Grandfather. Doubtless they were; but their fear did them no good. If they had humbled themselves and besought pardon for their many offences, even then, at the eleventh hour, mercy might have been found for them. After the children of Israel entered Canaan, the manna that had fallen for so many years ceased to fall, and they ate of the corn of the land.

George. Grandfather, I am wearying to hear of the wonderful siege; will you soon come to it?

Grandfather. Immediately. Joshua stood beside Jericho, engaged probably in examining its walls and fortifications, considering where it would be best to begin the attack, when he saw standing opposite to him a man with a drawn sword in his hand. "Art thou for us," the leader of the Israelites asked, "or for our enemies?" "Nay," was the reply, "but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." Then Joshua

fell with his face to the earth and worshipped him, and said, "What saith my Lord unto his servant?" The Lord told Joshua to put off his shoes, for he stood on holy ground. Joshua obeyed. The Lord then gave him instructions how he was to take the city. Joshua exactly followed them, so that Jericho fell into his hands.

George. How did he commence?

Grandfather. He called the priests and the people, and directed them what they were to do. They walked round the city in this order: First armed men went to prepare the way for the ark; next seven priests, each having a trumpet of ram's horn; then the ark; and the rearward followed it. They marched round the city in silence, except that the priests blew the trumpets they carried in their hands. When they had compassed the city once, they returned to their camp. Early the next morning they rose and marched round the city in exactly the same order, with the same accompanying music, the priests blowing the trumpets. This they did six days. On the seventh they rose at dawn, and marched round as usual, not once only as on other days, but seven times. The seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua told the people to shout, for the Lord had given them the city. Jericho, he further told them, was accursed. Every person and every thing in it were to be destroyed, except Rahab and those who were with her. The gold and silver, the vessels of brass and iron, were consecrated

to the Lord; the people must take nothing for themselves. The priests blew the trumpets—the people shouted loudly—and the wall fell down flat.

Johnnie. What made the wall fall down, grandfather?

Grandfather. The power of God, without whom no city can be fortified, and no city can be taken.

George. But why could they not have besieged Jericho, and taken it in the ordinary way?

Grandfather. That it was the will of God is sufficient for us to know, as it sufficed for Joshua and the Israelites. But we may see many reasons why it was an advantage for Jericho to be taken in a miraculous way. It would encourage the Israelites at their outset, and it would teach them to trust in God and look to Him for victory. It would shew before the heathen nations the power of the Almighty, and would render them more inexcusable if they persisted in resisting a power that was manifestly divine.

Marianne. Was Rahab saved alive?

Grandfather. Yes; Joshua sent the two spies to whom she had shewn kindness to bring her out of the city. They brought her and all her relations out to the camp. She was afterwards married to Salmon, a prince of the tribe of Judah, and is mentioned in the 1st chapter of St Matthew's gospel, as an ancestress of our Lord. All the other inhabitants of Jericho were put to death, men, women, and children, with their cattle and sheep; only the silver and gold, with the vessels of brass and iron remained, and they were put

into the treasury of the house of the Lord. The city was burnt.

George. Did the people not get anything at all?

Grandfather. They were forbidden to touch anything. The city of Jericho was in a peculiar manner taken by the Lord, therefore everything it contained specially belonged to Him. It was the first city taken in the land of Canaan, and the first fruits are due to God. A curse was to descend on whoever took to themselves anything that was in Jericho. A curse was also denounced against the man who should build Jericho. "He shall lay the foundation thereof in his first born," says Joshua, "and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it."

George. Was it ever built afterwards?

Grandfather. It was built by Hiel the Bethelite in the days when Ahab was king of Israel, and the curse, as it had been prophesied by Joshua, descended upon Hiel—his eldest son died at the commencement of the work, and his youngest son at the completion of it.

Johnnie. Then the people would be afraid to live in it.

Grandfather. No, for no curse had been denounced against those who might inhabit it, and no curse came. It was honoured by the prophet Elisha, who sweetened its waters. He changed the salt rivulet into a fresh stream, which rendered the plain of Jericho fair and fertile. Moses calls it the city of palm trees. It was also famous for its balsam trees. In later times it was a place of importance, second to none in Judea

except Jerusalem. There were many magnificent buildings in it, among which was a royal palace where Herod the Great died. It was destroyed by the Romans, and another city was built, but not exactly on the same site. The modern Jericho has dwindled down into a poor small Arab village. About four miles from it the ruins of the ancient Jericho may be seen, but no tree of any kind is to be seen near the ancient "city of palms."

This was all that grandfather told of the Jewish history that evening; and these are the questions that he asked of us:—

Of the spoil of the Midianites the soldiers paid from their half a five-hundredth part, and the people of their half paid a fiftieth part, as tribute to the Lord—What does this teach us?

After the battle the officers brought the valuables in their share as a thank-offering to the Lord—What do we learn from this?

In what respect was Joshua a type of Christ?

The Lord bade Joshua meditate on the law by day and by night, and keep it, that he might enjoy prosperity and success—What does this shew us?

The Israelites erected two heaps of stones to perpetuate the remembrance of the dividing of the Jordan—What does this teach us?

Of what is the river Jordan a type?

In what respect is the ark a type of Christ?

CONQUEST.

"If pain afflict, or wrongs oppress—
If cares distract, or fears dismay;—
If guilt deject, if sin distress—
The remedy's before thee—Pray."

HART.

George. Now, grandfather, we are all ready to hear of another battle. What was the next town that Joshua attacked?

Grandfather. About three leagues from Jericho is a city named Ai, or Hai, as it is called in the book of Genesis, where we are told that Abraham pitched his tent between it and Bethel. Joshua sent men to view the country. They went and viewed Ai. On their return they said to Joshua that there was no necessity for all the people going against the place; two or three thousand would be sufficient, for the men of Ai were few. So about three thousand of the Israelites went against Ai; the men of that place fought against them; killed thirty-six of them; put them to flight, and pursued them. This defeat depressed the people so much that we are told their hearts melted, and became as water.

George. They ought to have picked out braver men to go; it was very stupid to send three thousand cowards.

Grandfather. The three thousand men were not to blame; there was a reason for their arms not being successful at that time.

Marianne. But was it not very strange, grandfather, when the Lord had promised that all the land was to be theirs?

Grandfather. It had not been promised that in each conflict with the enemy success was invariably to attend the Israelites, although we have reason to believe that such would have been the case if the people had not displeased the Lord; for, as I said before, there was a reason for this defeat.

Marianne. What had they done wrong?

Grandfather. You shall hear. Joshua was greatly grieved. He rent his clothes, and put dust on his head, which, you know, are in the East symptoms of mourning and humiliation. The leader of Israel, along with the elders of Israel, lay on their faces before the ark until the evening. Joshua lamented and prayed; God heard and answered. We are taught by this that when trouble comes upon us, if we complain to God earnestly, he will hear and answer us. The Lord told Joshua that the reason of the Israelites' disgrace was that they had transgressed; they had taken of the accursed thing; had stolen and hidden it. "Neither will I be with you any more," said the Lord, "except ye destroy the accursed from among you." The Lord then directed Joshua

how he was to proceed in order to discover the offender, and also what punishment was to be inflicted on him. It was too late that night to do anything; but it was early in the morning when Joshua rose, that no time might be lost in purging the camp from that which defiled it. The people were brought forward by tribes; the lot fell on the tribe of Judah. The tribe of Judah was brought forward by families; the family of the Zarhites was taken. The family of the Zarhites was brought forward, man by man, and Zabdi was taken. He brought his household, man by man, and Achan was taken. Joshua then besought Achan to glorify God by confessing what he had done. Achan replied in these words—"Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it."

Marianne. How terrified Achan must have been when he saw the lot coming nearer and nearer to him; but, grandfather, I do not know what is meant by taking of the accursed.

Grandfather. I told you that the town of Jericho, along with all that it contained, was doomed to destruction; a curse was on it.

Johnnie. Had the coat that Achan stole come from Babylon?

Grandfather. It is more likely that it had been made in imitation of the Babylonian fabrics, or perhaps it may only mean some particularly fine dress belonging to the king or some of the great men of Jericho; at all events, the sight of it was too much for Achan; when he saw it, he coveted it; and as the passion of covetousness increases by the gratifying of it, the garment was not enough for him, he must needs add to it silver and gold, that his store might be more valuable.

George. How much ashamed Achan must have felt when he had to confess the theft before so many people.

Grandfather. This teaches us that though sin may be sweet in the commission of it, it is always bitter in the detection of it; and, when tempted to commit sin, we ought to remember that it most surely will come to light; and ask ourselves if the pleasure we expect from the sin will be as great as the pain we shall feel when it is detected;—if the pleasure and pain were to be weighed in scales, we would see that the pain would far outweigh the pleasure.

Marianne. But, grandfather, it is not right to take pleasure in doing what is wrong.

Grandfather. It is not; no one who truly loves the Lord can love what is displeasing to him; those who are really the people of God would feel their sin being known by men but a slight evil compared with His displeasure. Satan is ever on the watch to tempt us, and our carnal hearts are too prone to yield. Let us pray that we may be cleansed from secret faults.

Johnnie. Was anything done to Achan for stealing?

Grandfather. Yes. Joshua sent messengers to bring out of his tent the stolen goods which were found hidden as he had told them; then he, with the things that had ruined him, along with his sons and his daughters, his oxen, his asses, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, were taken into the valley of Achor. There, after everything living was stoned to death, all were destroyed by fire.

Johnnie. Was it the Valley of Achan that the place was called?

Grandfather. The Valley of Achor it was called. Achor means trouble, and the place of Achan's death was so named because Achan had brought trouble upon Israel. The Valley of Achor is said to be given for a door of hope, because there is hope for the people of God when they begin to put away the accursed thing from among them. Achan in the camp is a type of sin in the heart; it brings trouble and disgrace there. It becomes us, like the Israelites, to search for the evil thing, to root it out and utterly destroy it.

Marianne. Grandfather, does it not seem cruel to kill Achan's sons and daughters along with him?

Grandfather. It is most likely that they too were guilty; if they did not assist him in stealing the things, they had assisted in secreting them after they were stolen. That they did it to please their father is, you know, no excuse for so direct a violation of an express command. If they were innocent their

death must have tended to give the people a greater abhorrence against sin, and in particular against the sin of covetousness. After the death of Achan the Lord spoke to Joshua words of encouragement. The sin of Achan possibly made the heart of Joshua almost ready to fail. Joshua was a brave man, but the bravest of men may tremble because of sin; a traitor in the camp or in the heart is more to be dreaded than all that can assail us from without. To comfort Joshua, the Lord told him that he had given Ai and her king into his hand, that he might do to them as he had done to Jericho and her king, only the spoil and the cattle they were to take for their own. In order that Ai might fall into the hands of the Israelites, Joshua was directed to take there with him all the men of war, and to place an ambush behind the city.

Marianne. Did God tell him to do that?

Grandfather. Yes; and we learn from this that when any one acts prudently and well it is God who puts wisdom in their hearts. Joshua selected thirty thousand men of valour, and sent them away by night, commanding them to lie in wait behind the city, not very far from it. He, and all the people who were with him, were to make an attack on the city, and when the inhabitants came out against them they were to flee before them. The people of Ai would pursue, then those who were in ambush would rush in and seize on the city. Joshua tells them with certainty that they would succeed in this, for, says he, "The Lord your God will deliver it

into your hand." He further directs them, when they had taken the city, to set it on fire. These thirty thousand men went forth, and remained in ambush on the west side of Ai, between that city and Bethel. Early in the morning Joshua rose, and this is neither the first nor the second time only that we have been told of his doing so. When he had work to do he commenced it betimes, an example which we would do well to follow. He numbered the people, and then he and the elders of Israel led to Ai all the men of war. They pitched on the north side of the city, with a valley between them and it. We are then told that Joshua took five thousand and set them to lie in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the latter city.

George. You said, grandfather, that Joshua sent thirty thousand men there the night before.

Grandfather. You have started a difficulty, George, which has been differently explained by different people. Some think that the thirty thousand sent away by night make up the sum of the whole force that was to be employed in the taking of Ai; that the open attack was to be made with twenty-five thousand, and that the five thousand were all who were to lie in ambush; but this explanation does not agree well with the command given by God to Joshua, to take all the people of war with him.

George. But that might have meant that though all the soldiers were to go, only thirty thousand were to fight.

Grandfather. Of course that is the opinion entertained

by those who adhere to the explanation I have given you. Some have explained it differently; they think that the thirty thousand first sent away were to lie in ambush, and to seize the city after the inhabitants had vacated it. The five thousand sent afterwards were to guard the passes, and prevent the people escaping by any bye-path; and that the open attack on the city was to be made by the whole army of the Israelites, exclusive of those thirty-five thousand. There is still another way of explaining it, which is, that the five thousand was a party detached from the thirty thousand. The twenty-five thousand were to keep themselves concealed among the mountains till the five thousand had taken the city, and the main army had repulsed their enemies. Then, on a signal given, the twenty-five thousand were to come forth from their ambush, and intercept the men of Ai as they were endeavouring to escape. Which of these opinions we may entertain does not seem to me to be of much consequence.

Marianne. Grandfather, there are a great many things in the Bible that are very difficult to be understood.

Grandfather. There are many things that we shall never fully understand while we are in this world, but we must thankfully acknowledge that all that is necessary for our salvation is so plain that he that runneth may read. After having prepared everything for the next day's undertaking, the brave leader of the Israelites went into a valley by night to pray for success upon Israel's arms. We are taught by his example that how-

ever confident we may be of succeeding in anything we undertake, we ought never to neglect praying for the success that we expect. The attack was followed out in the way that had been agreed on. The king of Ai and his army went out to battle; Joshua and his men of war fled before them. The people of Ai easily fell into the snare that had been laid for them; they all rushed out to the pursuit, leaving their city unguarded. Then the Lord told Joshua to stretch out his spear towards Ai. Joshua obeyed. It might serve as a signal to those who were lying in ambush, for, immediately after, they rose from their place of concealment, went to the city, took it, and set it on fire. The smoke was the signal to Joshua and his army; when they saw it, they turned upon their pursuers. Those pursuers looked back to their city, but looked only to see that it was in the hands of their enemies. They had hitherto been confident, but now their confidence failed; the foes they had despised entirely surrounded them. There was no way of escape, and they were cut to pieces every one. The cattle and spoil the people took to themselves, as the Lord had commanded. Ai was burnt to ashes. Joshua continued steadily to stretch out the hand in which he held the spear, and did not draw it back nor rest it till the work of destruction was complete.

Johnnie. What was the use of holding out the spear, grandfather?

Grandfather. It was done in obedience to a special command of God; so it would be of use in directing the

people to look for help to that God with whom Joshua held communion, even in the thickest of the battle. It has been said by some that a flag was fastened to this spear, which would make it the better seen by the Israelites in a crowded field. There were twelve thousand people, which was the whole population of Ai, slain that day by the sword. But there was one exception. The king of Ai was taken alive and brought to Joshua. The leader of Israel commanded that the king be hanged on a tree till the evening; then his body was taken down and cast under a heap of stones where the city gate had been.

Johnnie. Why was he hanged, grandfather? why was he not killed with the other people of the town?

Grandfather. He had been so wicked that he required a special punishment. Doubtless he had been a notorious sinner, noted for his wickedness even when living in the midst of a wicked people. In the slaughter of Jericho, Rahab, for her faith, was set apart that she might be exalted to honour; in the slaughter of Ai, one was set apart too, but it was in order that he might suffer an ignominious death for his vileness.

George. What was the next place that the Israelites attacked?

Grandfather. There was a pause now in their warlike proceedings.

George. A pause; what did they wait for?

Grandfather. The Lord had directed them by his servant Moses, that as soon as they had obtained a posses-

sion in the land of Canaan, they were to assemble the people on two mountains there, Mounts Gerizim and Ebal, to sacrifice to the Lord, and to hear the law read. Joshua and all the Israelites assembled now to obey this command.

George. But they had not conquered all the country at that time.

Grandfather. Not nearly the whole of it, but they had conquered so much of it as to enable them to reach the place appointed. Had they been unwilling for the duty, they might have sought for a pretext to put it off to what might seem a more convenient season. They were almost surrounded by hostile nations, who, by their delaying to attack them, might have had time to band themselves together, which would have rendered their attack more formidable. The Israelites were commanded to take possession of the land of Canaan, and they might urge that the more speedily they proceeded with their conquests, the more easily the land would be subdued. But they had learned—and it would be well if we could learn the same lesson—that that is a bad business which hinders us from minding the one thing needful. They built an altar on Mount Ebal, and offered sacrifices to God, sacrifices of thanksgiving for the favour He had already shewn to them, and sacrifices of supplication for His guidance in what was yet before them. We learn from this that the way to prosper is to live ever near to God, acknowledging him by prayer and praise. While they were engaged in the reading of the law, six of the

tribes stood on Mount Gerizim, or near it; the other six stood on or near to Mount Ebal. The six on Mount Gerizim pronounced blessings on those who kept the law; the six tribes on Mount Ebal pronounced curses on those who did not keep it. So these two mountains are called the Mounts of Blessing and Cursing. Gerizim, the Mount of Blessing, is described as being remarkably fertile, while Ebal, the Mount of Cursing, is said to be remarkable for its savage barrenness.

George. It was an easy way for the Israelites to conquer first one town and then another, without ever having a large body of people to deal with; it was strange that when the country was divided into so many small states, the people did not think of entering into a league for their mutual defence.

Grandfather. They did think of it, but not till after they had seen the fate of Jericho and of Ai; then they were seriously alarmed, and entered into a league against this formidable foe. All the kings "in the hills and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea," gathered themselves together to fight with Joshua and with Israel with one accord.

George. They shewed their wisdom then. They could not hope for success opposing Joshua singly.

Grandfather. They would have shewn their wisdom more if they had submitted. It was insolence, and not bravery, to expect success when fighting against God; and they ought to have known by the miracles which had been wrought that a divine power was with the Israelites.

The confederated kings rushed upon their own destruction.

Marianne. Grandfather, I do not like to hear of the Israelites going into the country of the Canaanites, and killing all the people; does it not seem very cruel?

Grandfather. It would have been very cruel, and quite inexcusable, if any other nation had acted as the Israelites did; but we must consider that they acted by the special command of God; that they were instruments in his hand to avenge the idolatrous nations of Canaan, who, we cannot doubt, deserved the fate they met with. We must remember too that the country of which the Israelites now took possession was their own; it really belonged to them, for, more than four hundred years before, it had been given to their forefather Abraham by Him to whom all lands belong.

Marianne. Did the Israelites destroy all the nations of Canaan?

Grandfather. No, there was one nation who, by a very crafty plan, succeeded in making a league with them. I shall tell you of it and its consequences to-morrow evening, if we are spared till then.

What does Achan's disgrace teach us?

When tempted to sin, what ought we to ask ourselves?

Achan in the camp is a type of sin—Why?

Where is our most dangerous enemy to be found?

The Lord directed Joshua to place an ambush behind Ai—What do we learn from this?

The night before the battle Joshua went into the valley to pray—What are we taught by his example?

The Israelites built an altar on Mount Ebal, and there offered sacrifices to the Lord when only a small part of Canaan was subdued—What may we learn from this?

SUBMISSION AND OPPOSITION.

"The Lord our God is full of might,
The winds obey his will;
He speaks, and in his heavenly height
The rolling sun stands still.

Howl, winds of night, your force combine;
Without his high behest,
Ye shall not in the mountain pine
Disturb the sparrow's nest.

His voice sublime is heard afar;
In distant peals it dies;
He yokes the whirlwinds to His car,
And sweeps the howling skies.

Ye nations bend—in rev'rence bend—
Ye monarchs wait his nod,
And bid the choral song ascend
To celebrate the God."

H. K. White.

The next day, I remember, was extremely warm, yet we wandered farther than we usually did; so when we were wending our way homeward in the afternoon, we felt very tired. Grandfather's cottage, and the trees about it, looked delightfully fresh and cool to us, who were toiling along the dusty road. We said to one another, How nice it would be to lie on the soft grass while

grandfather told us the story he had promised about the crafty Canaanitish people. No such story was to be heard by us that night. When we came near enough to see into grandfather's garden, we saw that he was walking in it, and some one else with him. It was not very often that grandfather had visitors, and it seemed to us as if he ought never to have any, for he had not so much time to talk to us when strangers were with him. This evening we were particularly dissatisfied. We were very selfish children surely; for though grandfather seemed to enjoy his friend's company very much, we were greatly displeased with his being there, because he prevented us from hearing the story we expected. He took tea with us, and staid, I daresay, two hours after it, for he was as fond of flowers as our grandfather was, and had brought him a present of a basket of plants from his own garden. I do not remember now what any of these plants were, except that there were some very fine carnations among them. I never, even now, see a carnation without feeling ashamed of myself for my ill-humour that evening. I assisted to put the plants in the ground, but not so cheerfully as I ought to have done.

Grandfather observed our discontentment, and when his friend had left he called George and me to him, and spoke to us about it. We told him why we were displeased, and we thought when we were disappointed of anything, that we had a right to be discontented. He shewed us what a sinful thought that was; told us to

consider how much we have to be thankful for, and that we do not deserve anything of all that is given to us; that if we meet with disappointments every day, and every hour of every day, still we would have no right to be discontented, for it would be only what we deserved; yet for one little disappointment we forget all the goodness of the Great Giver, and displease Him by cherishing discontentment. Grandfather spoke to us for sometime that night, and spoke so seriously and earnestly, that I could not help crying, and I was truly sorry; so I do not think, if any one had come the next evening and prevented us from hearing the story we expected, that I would have been disappointed at all. I am sure that George felt very nearly as much as I did. Johnnie had nothing to do with it, poor little fellow; he was so tired that he had fallen asleep almost immediately after tea.

No obstacle presented itself the following evening, so we three children took our usual places as soon as tea was over, and grandfather immediately began.

Grandfather. There was a nation living in the land of Canaan called Gibeonites. When they heard of the great things done by the people of Israel, they saw that there was no use in trying to oppose them, and formed a plan for making peace with them. The other nations in Canaan were hardened by these remarkable events. The Gibeonites were softened by them. We must either be the better or the worse for the knowledge of the true God coming amongst us. The Gibeonites knew

that all the nations of Canaan were to be cut off. We are not told how they found that out, but it is very likely that some of the people of the land were present at the reading of the law on Mount Ebal. There they would hear that there was to be no mercy shown to them—no quarter given—and no covenant to be made with them. So the inhabitants of Gibeon would clearly see that their only plan for gaining peace was to pretend that they were not Canaanites. They went very artfully to work. They pretended to be ambassadors from a foreign state; and to make it appear that they had travelled a long way, they took old sacks on their asses, and the wine bottles they had with them were old and torn, and mended; the shoes they had on were old and patched; all their clothes were old; and their bread was dry and mouldy.

Johnnie. What is the meaning, grandfather, of their wine bottles being torn?

Grandfather. Their bottles were not made of glass as ours are, but of leather. The same sort of bottles are still used by the Arabs; they are more convenient for those who lead a wandering life than any other kind of bottle; milk or water, or any kind of liquor, keeps more fresh in them. I read a description of them lately, which I shall read to you; it describes them better than I can. "These leathern bottles are made of goat skins. When the animal is killed they cut off its feet and its head, and they draw it in this manner out of the skin, without opening its belly. They afterwards sew up the

places where the legs were cut off, and the tail, and when it is filled they tie it about the neck. The great leathern bottles are made of the skin of an he-goat, and the smaller ones, that serve instead of a bottle of water on the road, are made of a kid's skin." They are mended "sometimes by setting in a piece, sometimes by gathering up the wounded place in manner of a purse; sometimes they put in a round flat piece of wood, and by that means stop the hole."

Johnnie. They must be very curious looking bottles.

George. Not more curious than our bottles will look to people who have never seen any like them.

Grandfather. In the guise that I have described to you the men of Gibeon reached Gilgal, where the Israelites' camp was. They told Joshua and the leaders of Israel that they were come from a far country, and asked a league to be made with them. The leaders of Israel suspected that this might not be true, and said, "Peradventure ye dwell among us, and how shall we make a league with you?" This only made the Gibeonites speak more humbly than before. They said to Joshua, "We are thy servants." Joshua said, "Who are ye, and from whence come ye?" The Gibeonites in their reply did not name their country; they called it a very far country, wishing Joshua to understand that he could not possibly know anything about it, and would not be any wiser if they were to tell its name. They gave their reason for coming; it was because of the Lord, the God of the Israelites: they said, "We have heard of

the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt; and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon, king of Heshbon, and to Og, king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth." You observe they were artful enough to mention only those events which had happened a considerable time before; they take no notice of the miraculous passage of the Jordan, nor of the fall of Jericho, nor of the taking of Ai. If they had heard of any of these things in their own country it could not be very far distant. Hearing of these wonderful things which they had enumerated, the elders and all the inhabitants of their country sent them to meet the people of Israel, and to profess themselves their servants, that they might be induced to make a league with them. They then said that their dry mouldy bread was new and hot when they left their homes; their old torn bottles were new when they brought them away, and it was the very long journey, they said, which had made their clothes and shoes so worn. The Israelites were deceived by these things; they believed the story the people told them, and Joshua and the princes of the congregation made a league with them, and swore to let them live.

Marianne. Was it right, grandfather, for the Gibeonites to tell that story?

George. Surely it was; they could not have saved their lives any other way.

Grandfather. It is not right to tell a lie though it be to save our lives. They professed a respect for the God of

Israel as their motive in seeking the friendship of the Israelites, and there is little doubt that it really was their motive; but their conduct shewed how ignorant they were of the true God. If they had known how holy he was, they would not have thought he could be honoured by a falsehood.

George. But, grandfather, what could they have done? they could not have told who they were when they knew that all the Canaanites were to be put to death.

Grandfather. They ought to have confessed their sins, which had brought this great judgment upon their country. They ought to have put away their idols, and given up their country to the Israelites, and submitted themselves to God, trusting in his mercy. Yet there is great excuse for the conduct of the Gibeonites, when we consider their situation, and their imperfect knowledge of what was right. There is much in them to commend; their submission was very humble; it was speedy, they did not wait till the enemy marched against them. This teaches us that we ought not to put off repentance till the last, but turn from our sins at once, and seek for mercy. Their submission, too, was remarkable in its being so unlike the conduct of their neighbours. They went to seek the Lord, although they went alone. Let us imitate their example in this. The conduct of the Israelites was more culpable: they erred, and they had not the same excuse as the Gibeonites.

Marianne. What did they do that was wrong, grandfather?

Grandfather. They were forbidden to make a league with any of the nations of Canaan, and yet they made a league with the Gibeonites. No doubt they did not know at the time that they were people of Canaan, but they would not have been deceived by them if they had asked advice from God. We are told that they "asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord." This is sinful conduct in those who worship the true God.

George. Were they long of finding out that they had been deceived?

Grandfather. Only three days. On the third day the children of Israel arrived at the territory of Gibeon, and saw the four cities inhabited by that people. The Israelites were much displeased with their rulers because they had made a league with the Gibeonites.

George. But, grandfather, they could not be expected to keep their promise to the Gibeonites after being so much deceived.

Grandfather. A promise is too sacred a thing, George, to be lightly broken. Many would think that if they had been deceived into making a promise, it could not be binding on them after they had discovered the truth; but the conduct of the leaders of Israel shews that to be false reasoning. They might have found excuse for breaking their agreement if they had thought of doing it; for before entering into the league they protested that if the Gibeonites lived among them, they could enter into no league with them; yet when the covenant was once made, they considered it binding. We ought to

be very careful what we promise; but when our word is once given, it ought on no account to be recalled, if it be in our power to keep it, unless the keeping of it would be a sin.

Marianne. But when the Israelites had been commanded to put all the people of Canaan to death, was it not wrong to spare the Gibeonites?

Grandfather. The reason given for that command was, lest the Israelites might be led away by these nations to worship false gods. But the Gibeonites renounced their idolatry, and became servants to the Israelites. The chiefs of Israel evidently thought that whatever might be the danger in keeping their oath, there would be far greater danger in breaking it, for that would be sin. Their example teaches us to imitate the character of the good man who, though he promise to his hurt, yet makes his promise sure.

George. Did the Gibeonites give up their lands?

Grandfather. Yes; they became bondsmen to the people of Israel, and were employed as hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the Lord. They asked only life, and do not seem to have expected more. Their humility is a pattern to us: it teaches us to seek only for mercy—to ask for life eternal from God; and whatever lot he may assign for us in this world, though we may be placed in a very low station, let us cheerfully and diligently perform the duties of it.

George. What did the other Canaanites think of the Gibeonites submitting themselves to Joshua?

Grandfather. They were much alarmed, for Gibeon was a place of importance, and the people of it were noted for their bravery. The king of Jerusalem was called Adonizedek, which means the lord of righteousness. Perhaps he was descended from Melchisedek, king of righteousness, who was the king of Jerusalem in Abraham's time. If so, he was unlike his forefather in character. He paid no respect to the sons of Abraham. He sent to other four kings, the kings of Hebron, of Jarmuth, of Lachish, and of Eglon, saying, "Come unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon, for it hath made peace with Joshua, and with the children of Israel." So these five kings assembled their forces together, and marched against Gibeon, thinking probably that the people of that place would fall unassisted, for the Israelites would not bring themselves into danger to succour them. The Gibeonites thought differently. When they saw this formidable army coming against them, they sent to Joshua, saying, "Slack not thy hand from thy servants; come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us." Regarding Joshua as a type of Christ, this petition of the Gibeonites teaches us in every difficulty to look for help to Him who alone is able to help us at all times. Joshua and all his mighty men of valour prepared to march to the defence of their allies. The Lord spoke to Joshua, and these were the words he said, "Fear them not, for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not

a man of them stand before thee." So Joshua set off very quickly, and marched all night.

George. What was the use of his doing that when God had promised that he would conquer the enemy.

Grandfather. He shewed by his diligence that he believed that promise. The more firmly we trust in God, the more careful will we be to do our duty, for the promises of God are intended to encourage our endeavours. A complete victory followed. The five kings and their armies were completely defeated. They fled both to the north and to the south, and were pursued by the Israelites and slain. Notwithstanding the great slaughter among the Amorites by the sword of Israel, the Lord slew more of them by a miraculous hail storm. It was miraculous because it discomfited the enemy only, and gave no annoyance to the Israelites. Then Joshua prayed to the Lord that the sun and moon might stop in their course, that night might not come on before his day's work was done. Boldly, before all the people of Israel, their leader gave the command, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon." This speech shows the strong faith of Joshua. If what he said had not come to pass, the people would have thought him mad. But it did come to pass; the sun stood still until the destruction of the Amorites was complete.

Johnnie. How long did the sun stand still, grandfather?

Grandfather. A day, we are told; so that day would be double the length that it otherwise would have been.

It is thought that it was in midsummer, when the days there are fourteen hours long; so the length of that wonderful day would be twenty-eight hours.

George. But it is not the sun that moves, grandfather; it is the earth; yet Joshua told the sun to stand still.

Grandfather. Astronomy was not so well understood then as now; and if Joshua had commanded the earth to stand still, not a man in his army would have understood him; they knew nothing of the daily revolution of the earth upon its axis. The sun was at that time believed to move, and the earth to stand still. The Scriptures speak in the language that was generally understood at the time they were written; the sun is spoken of as rejoicing like a giant to run his race. Every one who heard Joshua command the sun to stand still would understand quite well what he meant, and would be able to tell whether the event verified his words. If he had lived in our day, he would have used different language to express his meaning.

Marianne. It was a very splendid miracle; but I have been wondering, grandfather, what was the use of it, for the battle could have been finished the next day?

Grandfather. It shewed the almighty power of God; —a power which extended not only to the earth, and the things that are in it, but even to the heavenly bodies, which are so far above man. It shewed the folly of those nations who worshipped the sun and the moon; for high as these are placed, yet he is above them, and has them under his control. But we have

not done with the five kings of the Amorites yet. None of them fell in battle; they all fled and hid themselves in a cave near Makkedah. When Joshua was told that they had been found there, he told the people to roll stones to the mouth of the cave, and leave them there; then go to pursue the flying foes, and prevent them from entering their cities. They slew all the Amorites who were scattered abroad; none remained except those who had taken refuge in fenced cities. And all the Israelites returned to the camp to Joshua in safety. There was neither loss of life nor loss of limb among them; and their enemies were so much overawed by their triumph that there was no one who dared to attempt anything, or even to say anything against them.

Johnnie. Were the kings left in the cave to be starved to death?

Grandfather. You need not be afraid, Johnnie, that Joshua would be so cruel as to torture them by a lingering death. They were left in the cave only till their people, who were at large, were all slain; for it was Joshua's practice to do first that which has most need for haste. This teaches us to make the one thing needful our first concern. When the people returned from pursuing their enemies, Joshua commanded the kings to be brought out of the cave. He was obeyed. Then he told all the captains of Israel to put their feet upon the necks of these kings, not that they might mock their fallen foes, but that they might give glory to their God, who had brought so low these mighty men of Canaan.

We believe it to have been in obedience to divine direction that Joshua gave this order. The general then spoke some words of encouragement to his soldiers, telling them to fear no other kings who might afterwards come against them, for so would the Lord do to all their enemies. Then Adonizedek and his four allies were slain with the sword, and their bodies hanged on a tree till the evening, when they were thrown into the cave where they had been hidden. It was made their grave. The same day Joshua took Makkedah, and put to death the king and all the people of it. He next took Libnah, and treated it in the same manner. Then he fought against Lachish, the city of one of the kings who had hid in the cave. It also the Lord delivered into his hand; he took it on the second day, and treated it as he had done the former places. Horam, king of Gezer, went up to help Lachish. He rushed upon his own destruction, for Joshua smote him and his people till none were left remaining. Then Joshua took Eglon and Hebron, cities belonging to two of the five kings. Debir was also taken, and all its inhabitants slain. The whole of the southern part of Canaan was now conquered—that part which afterwards belonged to Simeon, Judah, Dan, Benjamin, and Ephraim. All the people were killed, except the Gibeonites who had submitted, and those who fled to other countries, a plan which many of them are thought to have adopted. Those only remained who had hardened their hearts against the Lord, and believed themselves able to defy the mighty God of Jacob. Their

punishment was just; it was a type of the everlasting destruction of the enemies of the gospel. The nations that forget God shall be turned into hell.

George. Joshua was a great conqueror.

Grandfather. After enumerating these conquests, the reason is given for the general of Israel being so successful. It was "because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel." The victorious army had now returned to the camp at Gilgal, and was established there. But there was more work yet to be done. The kings in the north of Canaan united their forces, and marched against them. Jabin, king of Hazor, was at the head of them. He had got all the other kings in his district to unite with him, and they thought themselves strong enough to oppose Israel. They were very formidable; their people were numerous like the sand on the sea shore, and they had horses and chariots in great number.

George. I have seen a model of a chariot of war.

Johnnie. What like was it?

George. I could not very well tell you; it was a dreadful thing, with sharp points and spears standing out from it.

Grandfather. I shall read you a description of them, —"The beam to which the horses were fastened was armed with spikes with iron points, which projected forward. The yokes of the horses had two cutting falchions of three cubits length. The axletrees had fixed to them two iron spits, with scythes at their extremities. The spokes of the wheels were armed with

javelins, and the very felloes with scythes, which tore everything they met with to pieces. The axletree was longer, and the wheels stronger than usual, that they might be the better able to bear a shock, and the chariot less liable to be overturned."

Johnnie. They must have been fearful things for the enemy, they could kill so many people at once.

Grandfather. They certainly must have been very formidable machines, particularly to an enemy unaccustomed to encounter them. Lest Israel might be alarmed by this great host, and their warlike array, the Lord spoke to Joshua, and promised to deliver all these people to be slain; and as for their horses and chariots, they need cause no dread, for the Israelites were to lame the horses, and burn the chariots.

George. Lame the horses, grandfather! it was a great pity to do that; they would have been useful to the Israelites when they went to war, for they had no cavalry.

Grandfather. They were forbidden to have any, lest they should put their trust in them rather than in God, or lest they should be entangled by the idolatries of the nations from whom they would require to procure them. The prophet Isaiah denounces "woe upon them that go down into Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen because they are strong, but they look not to the Holy One of Israel, neither seek they the Lord."

Johnnie. Tell us about the battle now, grandfather.

Grandfather. We have a very short account of it. We are told that Joshua and his army fell upon these Canaanites at the waters of Sherom; that the great host of the heathen was entirely defeated; that some fled to Sidon, which lay to the north-west, and some to Mizpeh, which lay to the east. Their irregular flight shews the terror they had been in. The Israelites pursued and smote the whole of them, till none were left alive. They then lamed their horses and burned their chariots, as they had been commanded. Joshua only required now to make himself master of the fortified places, which he did by degrees. He burned none of the cities except Hazor, to the king of which all the other cities had formerly been subject. He rooted out the Anakim also, who lived in the mountains; both they and their cities were utterly destroyed. It was they who caused so much terror to the ten spies, when the children of Israel first approached the borders of Canaan. They mentioned with great alarm having seen the giants, the sons of Anak. The utter destruction of these giants shewed how groundless that terror was.

George. Did Joshua take long to subdue the country?

Grandfather. About six or seven years.

George. That was a very long time, why did he take so long?

Grandfather. I shall answer you in the words of scripture. The Lord, speaking to Moses before the Israelites first drew near to Canaan, said of the inhabitants of the land, "I will not drive them out from

before thee in one year, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field multiply against thee. By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land." Now, having brought the conquest of Canaan to a close, we may stop for to-night.

How did the Gibeonites' conduct shew their ignorance of the true God?

What do we learn from their speedy submission?

In what ought we to imitate their example?

The leaders of Israel kept their promise to the Gibeonites, though they had been deceived into making it,—What does their example teach us?

What are we taught by the humility of the Gibeonites?

What was shewn by the day being extended to twice its usual length when Joshua fought with the kings?

Of what was the destruction of the Canaanites a type?

Why were the Israelites victorious?

Why were the Israelites forbidden to use horses in war?

DAN AND BENJAMIN.

"Israel, that saw his works of grace,
Yet tempt their Maker to his face;
A faithless, unbelieving brood,
That tir'd the patience of their God.

"Look back, my soul, with holy dread,
And view those ancient rebels dead;
Attend the offer'd grace to-day,
Nor lose the blessing by delay.

"Seize the kind promise while it waits,
And march to Zion's heavenly gates;
Believe, and take the promis'd rest;
Obey, and be for ever blest."

WATTS.

George. Will you finish the history of Joshua's wars to-night, grandfather?

Grandfather. The history of Joshua's wars is finished; the remainder of his life was spent in dividing the land between the different tribes, and giving to the people his parting instructions.

Johnnie. How old was Joshua when he died?

Grandfather. One hundred and ten years old.

George. Were there no Canaanites left in the country at all?

Grandfather. There were many. They had managed to get possession of several of the strongholds in the country; but they dreaded the name of Joshua, and so long as he lived they gave no annoyance to the Israelites. On the great general's death, the people of Israel saw it to be necessary to go to war with their heathen neighbours, either because they were threatened by them, or because their increased population made more space necessary. They enquired of the Lord which of the tribes should first go up against the enemy. The Lord appointed that it was Judah who was to have the honourable post of first facing the foe. Judah asked Simeon to accompany him, and promised in return to assist Simeon in expelling the foe from his territory. Those that ask assistance ought to be ready to give it. Judah was the largest and most powerful tribe—Simeon was the least formidable of the whole; yet Judah asked his brother's assistance in fighting against the heathen, and that assistance was given. We learn from this that all Christians ought to unite against the common enemies of their faith. These two tribes were completely victorious over the Canaanites and Perizzites in a battle near Bezek. Adonibezek, the king of Bezek, fled,—they pursued and took him; and as a punishment for his crimes, they mutilated him by cutting off his thumbs and great toes.

Marianne. Was not that very cruel, grandfather?

Grandfather. It would have been barbarous, had not Adonibezek brought it upon himself. He acknowledged

it to be just; for he said,—"Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table; as I have done, so God hath requited me."

George. Seventy kings! he must have been a great warrior.

Grandfather. And a very successful one too, George, to have conquered so many in his time. But though a great warrior, he had not been a great man, or he could not wantonly have tortured so many of his fellow creatures. The high places of the world are slippery places. Adonibezek, the conqueror of seventy kings, died a captive in Jerusalem; and in his captivity he could think with little comfort of the power he had had, when he so abused it. The children of Judah performed other feats at that time; they took Jerusalem and Hebron. Caleb, it is probable, was the leader in this expedition. You remember he was one of the twelve spies, and that he and Joshua were the only two God-fearing men in the twelve. He was now an old man, but still strong and vigorous. Kirjath-sepher was in the portion that fell to Caleb. He promised that whoever should take that place would get his daughter Achsah to wife. His nephew went against it, took it from the Canaanites, and so gained Achsah. Her father gave her a portion of land on her marriage; but she asked him besides for springs of water. Land is of little use without water. Caleb gave her the upper springs and nether springs, which some think meant

two fields, so called from the springs they contained; but whether it was one field only or two, we cannot be certain. This we know, that the upper springs are types of the blessings that relate to the soul; the nether springs have reference to the blessings of this life.

George. Had the tribe of Judah cleared their country of Canaanites now?

Grandfather. Not thoroughly. They drove out those in the mountains; but those who were in the valleys they were afraid of, because they had chariots of iron.

George. That was cowardly.

Grandfather. It was cowardly to suffer their fears to conquer their faith; when the Lord had promised to be with them, they ought to have feared nothing. Yet Judah had acted bravely, and he assisted Simeon as he had promised. The children of Benjamin acted more feebly; they did not drive out the Jebusites, but continued to live amongst them. The Ephraimites, the descendants of Joseph, acted more vigorously; they exerted themselves to get possession of Bethel, which lay on their borders. The Lord blessed their exertions. They went up to the place cautiously seeking to find out how it might be entered most easily. The spies whom they sent forward encountered a man coming from the city. They asked him to shew them the entrance into the city, and promised him life on that condition. He, like Rahab, believing that the Lord was with them, shewed them a private entrance into the city. All the others who were in the city they slew with the sword.

Marianne. What became of the man who shewed them the way?

Grandfather. He went to Arabia, where a colony of the Hittites had settled themselves. There he built a city, which he called Luz, after the one he had formerly lived in.

Marianne. You called it Bethel, grandfather?

Grandfather. Bethel was the name given to it by Jacob; in memory of the vision he saw there he called it Bethel, which means the house of God. His descendants called it by the same name when it came into their hands, but its heathen inhabitants called it Luz, which means an almond tree. The Canaanites inhabited a great many towns in the territory of Manasseh. The children of Manasseh thought, perhaps, that the heathen would retire of their own accord, but they persisted in staying, and the degenerate sons of Joseph were too cowardly to expel them. When the Israelites grew strong they put the Canaanites to tribute, a plan which shewed the feebleness of their faith and the covetousness of their hearts. Yet some of them had not even got this advantage over the old inhabitants of Canaan, but lived among them, seemingly by sufferance rather than by right. The tribe of Asher was one which permitted itself to be treated thus, and the children of Dan were forced up into the mountains by the Amorites, and not allowed to come down into the valleys of their portion.

Marianne. Surely the children of Israel had not done what was right, grandfather, or their enemies would not have had so much power.

Grandfather. They were very far from doing what was right, as a story that I am now to tell you will shew; the circumstances recorded in it took place about this time.

In Mount Ephraim, the territory of the Ephraimites, there lived an old woman, who had a son named Micah. The old woman was fond of money; she had eleven hundred shekels of silver, which she kept hoarded up, and found great pleasure in looking upon it and counting it over occasionally.

Johnnie. How much is a shekel, grandfather?

Grandfather. A shekel is about equal in value to a half-crown. Well, this old woman's treasure suddenly disappeared. She was very much enraged—so much that she even forgot herself so far as to denounce a curse upon whoever had taken it. I told you that this old woman had a son named Micah; he had stolen the money, which was wicked, for though it belonged to his mother he had no right to touch it. Perhaps he thought he needed it at the time, and intended to pay it again; in that case he ought to have asked his mother for it, and not have helped himself slyly; but it seems more probable that he was not poor, but, like his mother, was fond of having silver in his possession. Though Micah was wicked enough to steal, he was not hardened enough to keep the money when his mother had sent a curse after it. He confessed that he had taken it. His mother then changed her curse into a blessing, and told him that she had dedicated the silver to the Lord, to make with it a

graven and a molten image. He returned the money to her, and she gave to the founder two hundred shekels, that he might make a graven and a molten image. The old woman took less than a fifth part of her money for this purpose, which shewed how fond she was of it still.

Marianne. Was it not wrong, grandfather, to make graven and molten images? the second commandment forbids the worship of images. Did Micah and his mother know that?

Grandfather. By their conduct we should suppose they did not; but if so, their ignorance was criminal. This story shews us the evil of covetousness. It made Micah steal; it made his mother curse;—silver was their god before it was formed into images by the founder.

Johnnie. Is that all the story, grandfather?

George. It cannot be, for there has not been anything about war in it yet. Go on, grandfather.

Grandfather. Besides the graven and molten images, Micah made an ephod, which is the dress the priest wears, and he made teraphim or little images, from which he would ask advice; he set apart a room in his house for keeping these in, and he made a priest of one of his sons.

Marianne. Did he think the little images could give him any advice, grandfather? he must have been very foolish.

Grandfather. It is easy to see the folly of Micah, Marianne, because the worship of images is not a sin to which we are tempted, but we are quite as foolish as

Micah was when we love anything else better than God, or trust to any other rather than to Him. This is a sin to which our own hearts are continually tempting us; to avoid it we must "watch and pray."

I shall now go on with our story. To Micah's house there came a visitor,—a stranger to Micah's family. He was a young man, and was travelling about the country seeking for a situation. He was a Levite, but his mother having belonged to the tribe of Judah, up to this time he had lived in Bethlehem-Judah with his mother's relations. Micah asked him about his circumstances, and learning from him that he had no settled place of abode, asked him to stay with him and act as priest in his family. He would treat him, he said, with respect, and, by way of payment for his services, would give him ten shekels of silver in the year, besides his food and a suit of clothes. The Levite thought that a small income was better than no income at all, and, as his desire was merely to get a living, and not to do good, he was satisfied to stay with that family of idolaters, and worship images with them. Micah was much pleased when the young man agreed to stay with him; he thought surely God would shew him favour now when he had got a Levite for his priest.

Johnnie. Why did he think so, grandfather?

Grandfather. The Levites were set apart to the priestly office, therefore a peculiar sacredness attached to them. Yet Micah might more reasonably have expected a judgment than a blessing when he had enticed the Levite

into being an idolater. The name of this young Levite was Jonathan. We are told that he was the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh. Some think that Moses is meant by Manasseh, so that he would be the degenerate son of the great lawgiver, but on that point there is difference of opinion. I told you a little ago that the tribe of Dan was pent up in the mountains by the Amorites. When their numbers increased they found it impossible for all of them to live together, so they resolved to plant a colony in another place.

George. Why did they not make a sally upon the Amorites and drive them off their land?

Grandfather. Want of faith was doubtless the reason why they did not, though they could easily excuse their conduct to themselves by saying it would be impossible to expel the Amorites.

George. But where could they go to plant a colony?

Grandfather. To one family in the tribe of Dan there had been given a piece of land in the very north of Canaan. Now this family, instead of going to take possession of their own inheritance, preferred living at their brethren's expense. This was mean and cowardly. They were afraid of the heathen who lived in their land. However, as their numbers increased, they found that it would be necessary to attempt something: better face a foreign foe than stay to starve at home. They chose five brave men from among them, and sent them to see how the land looked, and what sort of people inhabited it. Away they went on their expedition, and as they

journeyed they came to Micah's house. Jonathan, the priest, was an old acquaintance of theirs. Being a man of a roaming turn, he had roamed into their country at some time or other. They asked him what he was doing there, so far from home. He told them that Micah had hired him to be his priest. He was not ashamed to tell this, and he was rather pleased with the opportunity of displaying the chapel in which he officiated, his graven and molten images, the ephod and the teraphim. They did not think the worse of him for what they saw; their respect for him was increased, which shewed how ignorant and depraved they were. They even requested this idolatrous priest to ask counsel of God whether their way would be prosperous or not. Jonathan, after consulting his teraphim, gave them a favourable answer.

Marianne. Did the priest believe in the teraphim, grandfather?

Grandfather. We cannot be certain whether he did or not, but if he did not believe in the images, he did not believe in the true God, or he would not have dared so to affront him. Now, in the conduct of these Danites, though there is something to blame, there is something that we may take as a pattern to ourselves. They did wrong in deferring to consult God till part of their journey was past; they did wrong in consulting Him by images, yet they shewed a desire for guidance from God, an example which we would do well to follow and improve upon. The five men proceeded on their

journey. Laish was the name of the place whither they were bound. The inhabitants of that place were very wicked: they had no rulers to controul their excesses, so they lived indolent and careless lives; and in case of any danger coming upon them, they had no friends who would be willing to take their part. All these things were pleasant for the five spies to see, for none are so easily overcome by others as those who cannot overcome their own passions. They returned well satisfied to their brethren, and urged them to bestir themselves, and march without delay. Their advice was followed: six hundred men of the Danites, with their wives, their children, and their cattle, started for Laish. The second day they came to Micah's house. When they came near it the five men who had been sent as spies told them of the wonderful things it contained—the images, the ephod, and the teraphim. They could tell, that when they consulted them they got a good answer from them, and they thought it would be very desirable, not merely to consult them, but to take them with them. The priest was standing at the gate as they came up, loitering idly about, glad when any one passed by, that he might have a talk with them. It was not often that he got six hundred men of war to hold a colloquy with. While he was enjoying this unlooked for treat, the five men who had been there before slyly entered the house, found their way to the chapel, and carried off its poor defenceless inhabitants. When they went out again to the gate, and the priest saw what they had got, he asked them what they meant.

"Hold thy peace," they said to him, "lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest: is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe, and a family in Israel?"

Jonathan had no fault to Micah; he had taken him in when he was houseless, and had treated him with unvarying kindness; but he who had been false to his God could not be expected to be true to any earthly friend; he was such a low minded man, that his own interest was the highest point at which he aimed. He accompanied the Danites with a joyful heart. As soon as Micah discovered the theft, he gathered his neighbours together, and set out after the robbers. The children of Dan, having cattle with them, could not travel very fast, so they were overtaken by Micah and his company. The robbed Ephraimite, confident in the justice of his cause, called out to them. The Danites turned round and asked what was the matter. Micah accused them of having taken away his most valuable treasures, his gods and his priest. The children of Dan made no attempt to excuse what they had done. They did not offer to make up to the man for his loss; they contented themselves with telling him that if he were not quiet at once, they would kill him and his family. This was enough. Micah, seeing that they were too strong for him, returned to his house.

Marianne. I am sorry for poor Micah, he was very ill used.

Grandfather. If the loss of his idols shewed him his own folly in trusting to them, and led his heart to the true God, it would be no loss at all, but gain. The children of Dan then marched to Laish, which they speedily conquered. They seem, indeed, to have met with no resistance in killing the inhabitants, and burning the city. They built another city in its place which they called Dan. This is a conquest of which we think with no pleasure, for these false Israelites established idolatry as soon as they established themselves.

George. There is not very much war in that story, grandfather.

Grandfather. Very little. Another which took place about the same time would please you better in that respect. I am afraid there will not be time to tell it to-night.

George. I think there will; that has not been a long one; it is not late.

Grandfather. Well I shall begin it at any rate.

Marianne. But, grandfather, before you begin another story, I wish to ask, could not Micah get the priest and the other men punished for taking away his images?

Grandfather. No, Marianne, he could not get them punished, because "in those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes." It is a sad proof of the wickedness of the human heart, that when we are told every man did what was right in his own eyes, we know it means that the people were going very far wrong. The other story I

am to tell you presents a dreadful picture of the wickedness of the times. A Levite was travelling from Bethlehem-Judah to Mount Ephraim. His wife was with him, and his servant, and they travelled on asses. When they were near Gibeah, a city belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, the sun went down. They could not pursue their journey in the dark, so they entered the city, intending to remain there till morning. Inns were not common in those days, and as no one offered them a night's lodging, the travellers could not make a better of it than to sit in the street. While they were sitting there an old man came up to them. He had been working in the fields all day, and now that the evening had come he was wending his way homeward. Rest is pleasant after labour; we cannot know how pleasant it is until we have laboured. That industrious old man would enjoy the comforts of his home far more than the idle people of the place who did nothing but mischief all day. Though he lived in Gibeah, the old man did not belong to Gibeah; he was an Ephraimite. When he saw the Levite sitting in the street he asked him to what place he was bound, and from what place he had come. The Levite told him, and added that no one had offered him shelter for the night; shelter was all he required, for he carried with him provender for the asses, and food for himself, his wife, and his servant. Heartily did the old man from Mount Ephraim offer him, not only a lodging, but insisted on supplying him with everything else that was needful for comfort. No doubt this offer

was thankfully accepted by the Levite, and they all went together to the old man's house. Notwithstanding the kindness of their host, they got little peace under his roof. The wicked men of the place beat at the door, and succeeded in getting the wife of the Levite away with them. They injured her so much that she died. When her husband opened the door in the morning, he saw her lying dead. He lifted up her body, put it on an ass, and journeyed homeward. Then, instead of burying the remains of his poor wife, he divided her into twelve pieces, and sent a piece to each tribe of Isrsel.

Marianne. What a horrible thing for the man to do, grandfather; why did he do it?

Grandfather. You must remember that I told you at this time there was no king in Israel; there was no one to punish offenders; and it was not right that offenders so notorious as these Benjamites should pass unpunished. As there was neither king nor judge to whom the Levite could appeal for justice, his only plan was to engage all the people of Israel to espouse his cause.

Marianne. But he might have sent to tell them about it without sending a piece of his wife's body; that was such a horrible thing.

Grandfather. It certainly does seem so to us, but it was agreeable to the customs of the times. It was common, when one wished to bind other persons in an engagement to assist him, to send to each of these persons a piece of a dead body; those who accepted of a

piece were considered to have entered into a strict bond with the person who sent it. The body so divided was generally that of an animal which had been offered in sacrifice. The children of Israel unanimously responded to the call of the Levite; they gathered together as one man; four hundred thousand men of war appeared before the Lord in Mispeh. They called the Levite before them, and asked him to explain this dreadful business. He related the circumstances, the hearing of which determined them to go up against Gibeah. None of them thought of returning to their homes till they had avenged this wrong, but they sent a tenth part of their whole number to bring the food that they would require while they were engaged in the war. In the next place, they sent messengers to the Benjamites, asking them to deliver up those wicked people who lived in Gibeah, scarce deserving the name of men. Yet bad as they were, their part was taken by all the tribe of Benjamin, who paid no attention to the request of the other tribes, but prepared themselves to oppose them in battle. The number of the children of Benjamin who were men of war was twenty-six thousand; among these were seven hundred men left-handed, who could sling stones to a hairbreadth, and not miss.

George. Twenty-six thousand was a very small army to oppose four hundred thousand; the Benjamites would be sure to be beaten.

Marianne. Of course they would, because the Israelites were in the right.

Grandfather. Then you will both be much surprised to hear that the Benjamites were victorious, and that they slew twenty-two thousand of the Israelites in the battle.

George. That was very strange; the other tribes must have been very cowardly to allow themselves to be beaten by so few men.

Marianne. Perhaps the Israelites had not prayed for the assistance of God.

Grandfather. They had not; they were too confident in the goodness of their cause, and in the superiority of their numbers. Before going to battle they went up to the house of God, but it was only to ask which tribe should lead. The Lord replied that Judah was to have the leadership. This honour was given to the tribe of Judah because from it our blessed Lord was to descend. After their defeat the children of Israel again went up to the house of the Lord, and with more humility than before. They feared that they had done wrong in fighting against their brethren, and they asked of the Lord, "Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin, my brother?" The reply of the Lord was, "Go up against him." A second time, therefore, the children of Israel went against the children of Benjamin. The Benjamites sallied out of Gibeah, and a second time they repulsed the Israelites with loss; they slew of the children of Israel eighteen thousand men.

Marianne. Why was that, grandfather? surely the Benjamites did not deserve to win.

Grandfather. Nor did the Israelites. They had suffered the gross idolatry of Micah, and of the Danites, to pass unpunished, though the Lord had commanded them to put idolaters to death. By permitting these defeats to come upon them, the Lord graciously designed to bring them to consider their ways, and to put away evil from among them. Benjamin was used as an instrument to humble his brothers. When they were humbled, then he was to meet with the punishment his sins deserved. After their second defeat, the children of Israel went up to the house of the Lord, and wept, and fasted until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings there. Again they asked of the Lord if they should go up to battle against their brethren any more. Again the reply of the Lord was, "Go up," and the promise was added, "To-morrow I will deliver them into thine hand." Encouraged by this promise, they vigorously exerted themselves to win success. They followed the plan that had been put in execution so successfully against Ai. Men in ambush were placed round about Gibeah, while the body of the army advanced against the city, engaged the Benjamites in battle, and fled before them. The men of Benjamin, emboldened by their former success, rushed eagerly on, thinking that the day was their own. The Israelites who were in ambush entered the city and set it on fire. The Benjamites turned, saw the smoke and the flames ascending, and knew that they were conquered. Their confidence forsook them, and they fled to the wilderness.

On all the roads they encountered enemies, who gave no quarter, so that twenty-five thousand fell that day of the children of Benjamin. Only six hundred men escaped, who took refuge in the rock Rimmon, where they remained four months.

George. So the Israelites conquered them completely at last?

Grandfather. The Israelites conquered when they gave up all confidence in their own strength, and trusted only in the Lord. Their superior numbers made them too secure of victory. The Lord shewed them that the battle is not always to the strong. When they were brought to see that they could do nothing without help from him, then "the Lord smote Benjamin before Israel."

George. Was that the end of the Benjamite war, grandfather?

Grandfather. Justice was satisfied with regard to the Benjamites; nothing more was done against them. The Israelites made a treaty with the six hundred who remained, and shewed kindness to them. But justice required to be executed upon other offenders. None of the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead had gone to assist in the war against Benjamin. For this neglect of duty they were all slain—twelve thousand Israelites marched against them, and smote them with the edge of the sword. Jabesh-Gilead was a city in the tribe of Gad, on the east of the Jordan. It is late now, my children. See, poor Johnnie is falling asleep; he must go to bed before the questions are asked.

Judah and Simeon mutually assisted each other i fighting against the heathen,—What do we learn fro this?

Of what are the upper and nether springs types?

We have little temptation to the worshipping images,—In what way are we tempted to idolatry?

In what ought we to follow the example of th Danites?

Who are most easily overcome by others?

"Every man did that which was right in his ow eyes,"—How does this prove the wickedness of the huma heart?

In the Benjamite war why were the Israelites twic defeated?

When were they successful?

THE JUDGES OF ISRAEL.

"Israel, a name divinely blest,
May rise secure, securely rest;
Thy holy guardian's wakeful eyes,
Admit no slumber nor surprise.

"No sun shall smite thy head by day,
Nor the pale moon, with sickly ray,
Shall blast thy couch: No baleful star
Dart his malignant fire so far.

"Should earth and hell with malice burn,
Still thou shalt go, and still return,
Safe in the Lord; his heavenly care
Defends thy life from every snare."

WATTS.

THE next evening, after we had assembled as usual, grandfather told us that he was to give us an account of some of the judges who at different times ruled the people of Israel. George asked if they were warriors as well as judges?

Grandfather. They were, and brave warriors too. The Israelites were very wicked; the worship of false gods was general among them. They forgot the Lord, who had cast out the heathen to make room for them; they united themselves with those very heathen, even so far as to serve their gods. Their temples were groves

of thick trees; there, in the centre, their images were placed, and there, before those contemptible deities, the Israelite and the Canaanite bowed down together. The sin of the chosen people called loudly for punishment. The Lord was greatly displeased, and He permitted a foreign prince to bring them under his yoke. They were first subjected by Chushan-rishathaim, the king of that part of Syria which lies between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. From its situation it derives its name, Mesopotamia, which means in the midst of rivers. The territory of Chushan-rishathaim lies distant from the borders of Canaan, so that doubtless the Israelites saw no reason for dreading an attack from him; yet he was the instrument appointed to bring them to a sense of their duty. After paying tribute for eight years to the King of Mesopotamia, the people were humbled, and cried to the Lord. When they were prosperous it was to Baal that they prayed. When they were in trouble they sought deliverance from God. We learn from this, and many instances like this, that adversity is often a greater blessing than prosperity.

George. Was it long after the Israelites took possession of Canaan that they were subdued by the King of Mesopotamia?

Grandfather. It was thirty-eight years after they entered Canaan. Two thousand five hundred and ninety-one years after the creation of the world, one thousand four hundred and thirteen before the Christian era, Chushan-rishathaim brought the Israelites into subjec-

tion. For eight years they were his tributaries. Then, in answer to their cry of distress, the Lord raised up a deliverer, Othniel, the son of Kenaz, and nephew of Caleb. You will remember that I mentioned him to you before; he was a brave man in his youth, and he retained the same fearless spirit when advanced in years.

George. He would march at once against Chushan-rishathaim, and drive him away to his own country again?

Grandfather. Something was to be done before he marched against the Mesopotamians. Othniel first judged Israel, that is, he reproved them for their sins, and reformed them; he subdued the sins of the people, and then went out to war. This teaches us, that the way to attain success in our undertakings is to begin by bringing our own spirits into subjection. Othniel was victorious. The Lord delivered Chushan-rishathaim into his hand, so by his instrumentality the people were delivered. While he lived he kept the people to their duty, so that the land had rest. When Othniel died the wayward people again bowed their knees before the images in the groves. Another enemy was raised up to oppress them. Eglon, king of Moab, was strengthened against the Israelites by the Lord, because they had done wickedly. The country of the Moabites lay nearer to them than that of the Mesopotamians, therefore we may suppose that subjection to them would be more keenly felt than to their former oppressors. They had more than one enemy to triumph over them at this time, for

the Ammonites and Amalekites joined with the Moabites, and took possession of a stronghold in the land of Canaan, supposed to be near the site of Jericho, for it is called the City of Palm Trees, which had been the name of Jericho itself. Double guilt calls for double punishment. The Israelites served the king of Mesopotamia eight years only; they served the king of Moab eighteen. Yet when in their distress they cried to the Lord, He was merciful to them, and raised up a second deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, a left-handed man, of the tribe of Benjamin.

George. There were surely a great many people in that tribe who were left-handed.

Grandfather. It seems not to have been a very uncommon thing among the Benjamites. It is curious that the meaning of Benjamin is the son of the right hand. The people of Israel sent a present to Eglon, in addition to the ordinary tribute which he exacted from them. It was Ehud the Benjamite who was appointed to deliver the offering of the people to the oppressor, whom they did not love; but as they feared him, they were willing to do anything that would propitiate him. Now Ehud, to free the Israelites from the yoke of Moab, resolved to assassinate the tyrant who oppressed them. For this purpose he got a short dagger made, half a yard long, which he concealed under his clothes. When the present had been offered, and accepted, he and the people who were with him retired. They all proceeded on their journey together, till they came to Gilgal, where

tones had been erected in memory of the miraculous
age of the Jordan. It is thought that images were
there by the Moabites, either placed upon, or made of
e very stones, and that the sight of the images fired
new energy the pious zeal of Ehud. He told his fel-
travellers to proceed on their journey, while he himself
rned to the palace of Eglon. There he announced
he had a secret errand to the king. He was
red into the king's private apartment, a cool plea-
room, called a summer parlour. All the attendants
ed, and the Moabite and Benjamite were alone.
son of Israel announced a message from God. The
hen monarch rose to receive it. For one instant
l's dagger gleamed in his hand, the next instant the
essor of the Israelites had received his death wound.
ıtly Eglon fell, and swiftly Ehud withdrew. The
e of the summer parlour he locked behind him, and
e required to pass through any guards on his way,
eared nothing, and they suspected nothing. The
ınts of Eglon seeing the doors of the parlour locked,
osed that the king wished to rest, so they did not
the door for some time. When they did, and saw
had been done, Ehud was too far off for them to
ct to overtake him. Meantime the bold Benjamite
led a trumpet, to rally round him the oppressed
lites. They secured the fords of the Jordan, so that
of the Moabites could escape. They all fell by
swords of the children of Israel. The Moabites
left their own country and crossed the Jordan to

bring the Israelites into bondage; justly therefore did they find themselves imprisoned by the Jordan, and prevented from returning to their country and their freedom.

George. Ehud was a brave man.

Marianne. But was he a good man, grandfather? Was it right to pretend he had a message from God and then to kill Eglon?

Grandfather. He did not *pretend* that he had a message from God, for he really had one. He was commissioned by the Lord to execute his will upon the oppressor of his people. Ehud was the messenger sent by the King of Kings, and the message sent was, that the king of Moab must die. Considered as the bearer of a message from God, Ehud appears to us the honoured instrument of his country's freedom; but if we consider him as having no divine commission, he appears only a base assassin.

George. I do not see that, grandfather; I think it was a very brave act, to kill the tyrant in his own palace, amongst his own people, and march out untouched by any of them. I cannot see anything wrong in it.

Grandfather. The boldness of an action does not prove it to be right, George. If any one now-a-days were to imitate Ehud, even though he were in the same circumstances, and had the same success, he would be an assassin and nothing more, because we live under a different dispensation, under the pure light of the gospel, which speaks good will to men.

Marianne. But a bad man might have done what

Ehud did, and have said that God had appointed him to do it.

Grandfather. You do not seem disposed to think favourably of Ehud, Marianne. We are sure that his "message" was no pretence, from the blessings that his administration brought to the people of Israel. While he lived the land had rest, and it was not till Ehud was dead that his brethren again forsook the Lord. For eighty years there was peace in Israel. There was another judge in Canaan who was cotemporary with Ehud. While the territories lying near the Jordan were subject to the Moabites, those on the west of Canaan were annoyed by the Philistines. Shamgar, the son of Anath, from following the plough, rose up to be the avenger of his country's wrongs. With his ox goad for a weapon, he slew six hundred of the Philistines, and delivered his own people.

Johnnie. What is an ox goad, grandfather?

Grandfather. I have seen it described as an instrument about eight feet long, with a sharp prickle at one end, and at the other a small iron spade. They are not all alike; many are smaller than that, and have no spade at the end; but it is probable that the one with which Shamgar did such execution was of the largest and most formidable kind.

Johnnie. But what is the use of them?

Grandfather. They are for urging on the oxen when they are in the plough; and when the same man holds the plough and manages the oxen, he uses the sharp

end for driving the oxen, and with the spade at the other end he cleans the plough from the clay that adheres to it in working.

George. What happened when the eighty years came to an end?

Grandfather. When the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, he gave them into the power of Jabin, the Canaanite, king of Hazor.

Marianne. You told us about some one of that name in Joshua's time.

Grandfather. The Israelites under Joshua conquered the king of Hazor, and destroyed his city; but as the Israelites, from indolence and faithlessness, did not pursue their conquests, these Canaanites again became a nation, and had a king of their own named Jabin, like the former one. Now this king of Hazor had become so strong that he was able mightily to oppress the children of Israel, and to continue that oppression for twenty years. Then the people of Israel cried to the Lord, which few of them would have thought of doing if trials had not come. Trouble brings prayers from those who never prayed before. At this time Israel was judged by a woman named Deborah. She is said to be the wife of Lapidoth. The word Lapidoth means lamps, so that the expression may mean, she was a woman of superior gifts; light from heaven had shone into her mind. Her station was under a palm tree, called in honour of her the Palm Tree of Deborah. To her the people of Israel resorted for justice and truth, and by her they were

ncouraged and assisted to root out idolatry from the and.

George. But it was a pity they had a woman to udge them; she would not be able to fight.

Grandfather. You are right so far. Though her ead was superior to that of any of the men of Israel, n the strength of her arm she was inferior to them. But she did better than if she had fought. She prepared he people for going to war; she provided a leader for hem, and taught him how to act. She called to her Barak from Kedesh-naphtali, and she gave to him the ommand from God, that Barak was to collect ten thou- sand men, and march towards Mount Tabor.

George. How did Deborah prepare the people for going to war?

Grandfather. She prepared the Israelites for going to war by causing them to put away their idols, and return to the Lord God of their fathers. Ten thousand men was to be the amount of Barak's army, though he was to be opposed by a great multitude, and nine hundred chariots of iron. The leader of this multitude was Sisera, the general of Jabin's army. To encourage Barak, Deborah told him that the Lord was to draw Sisera to him to the river Kishon, there to deliver him into his hand. Yet Barak refused to go unless Deborah accompanied him. This might be because he regarded her presence as an earnest that God would bless his undertaking; or he might desire her presence on account of his soldiers, who all regarded Deborah with so much

respect. Without hesitation Deborah agreed to go, telling Barak at the same time that this journey would not be for his honour, for the Lord was to give Sisera into the hands of a woman. It is to Barak's honour that this announcement made no change in his willingness to go to the battle, nor in his desire that Deborah should accompany him. He was not a vain man; he sought more to do good than to gain praise. Let us imitate his example in this.

Marianne. Did Deborah mean, grandfather, that the people would say she had conquered Sisera, when she said he was to be given into the hands of a woman?

Grandfather. It was not of herself that Deborah spoke, but of another woman who was to take a prominent part against Sisera. But as Barak knew no other woman who was likely to take from him the honour of the victory, he must have understood Deborah's words as referring to herself. So Barak and Deborah with ten thousand men marched to the top of Mount Tabor.

Johnnie. Is it a high mountain, grandfather?

Grandfather. About fourteen or fifteen hundred feet high. It is steep, and was quite inaccessible to the horses and chariots of the Canaanite army, which made it an advantageous station for Barak. He posted his men on the top, which is a flat plain, a quarter of a mile long and half a quarter broad. Mount Tabor has charmed the travellers who have ascended, by the magnificent view from its summit; but it is more worthy of remark

on account of its being the scene of the transfiguration of our blessed Lord. When the information was brought to Sisera that the Israelite army had gone to Mount Tabor, he collected all his men of war, brought out his nine hundred chariots of iron, and marched to the river Kishon; he crossed it and encamped at the foot of Mount Tabor. The next morning early Deborah told Barak to march down the mountain and attack Sisera. The general obeyed. By faith he hesitated not to quit the strong position he had taken. Again Barak is an example to us; he teaches us to do our duty, and leave the consequences to God. The Lord discomfited Sisera. A violent storm of hail is believed to have beat in the faces of the Canaanites, and much rain must have fallen, for the river Kishon, which is generally shallow, became a deep and rapid stream, and swept away many of the enemy who were encamped on its banks. Sisera found his chariots useless to him, so he was glad to descend and flee on foot. His example was followed by all his men of war; they fled closely pursued by Barak and the Israelites. All that great host fell by the swords of the sons of Jacob; not one man was left.

Marianne. But you have not said anything, grandfather, about the woman who was to conquer Sisera.

Grandfather. I shall tell you of her now. A people called the Kenites, who were descended from Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, and priest of Midian, lived in the land of Canaan. They worshipped the true God

and kept the law of Moses, so they lived on amicable terms with the children of Israel. However, in this war with the king of Hazor the Kenites were neutral. Knowing this, Sisera thought he might be secure with them. He fled to their tents; for when I told you that all the host of the Canaanites fell by the sword, I meant all except Sisera himself. He escaped to the tent of Heber, the chief of the Kenites. They were a pastoral people living in tents, whose riches consisted of flocks and herds. Jael, the wife of Heber, went out to meet the defeated general. She welcomed him with seeming kindness, and offered him shelter in her tent. He gladly accepted her offer, and asked for a little water to quench his thirst. The best drink she possessed was milk, which she gave to him, the richest she had, and in her finest dish. Then Sisera, thinking that his only chance for safety was in concealment, told Jael that if those passing by were to ask if any one were within, she must deny the fact. The wife of Heber made no reply to this; but no sooner did she see that the enemy of Israel was sound asleep, than she took a long nail, one of those used for fastening the tents, and with a hammer she drove the nail through the temples of Sisera, and fastened his head to the ground.

Marianne. Oh! that would kill him, grandfather. How cruel; that surely was not right.

Grandfather. I cannot defend the conduct of Jael;—to invite a man into her house,—to proffer him hospitality; and then, when he trusted in her, to put him to

death, was false and treacherous. Though Deborah, in speaking of this action, says,—"Blessed above women shall be Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite;" still we need not understand that as intimating that the action itself was right, but rather that those who had suffered from the oppression of Sisera would load with approbation the woman who had taken his life. It is not always those actions that are best in themselves that are most praised by the world; it bestows its loudest approval on those which are most fortunate in their results.

Marianne. I think Jael was very wicked, the worst woman I ever heard of.

Grandfather. We must not judge too severely of her, Marianne; when we think the conduct of any one deserving of blame, we ought always to take into view those circumstances which may make the blame appear less. There is little doubt that Jael was an Israelite at heart, looking on them as the peculiar people of the God whom she worshipped. She thought what was done for them was right; what was done against them was wrong. She wished that Sisera might be conquered; but when she saw that proud general of the Canaanites a miserable fugitive, it may have been pity alone that impelled her to offer him protection, for if she did not take him in, his death was certain. She took him in and treated him kindly; but when he asked her to tell a falsehood, she may have thought it no longer necessary to keep faith with him. In this she was wrong, for the sins of others can never excuse our own.

If we learn this lesson from Jael it will be good for us to have heard of her. It has been observed by some that the wife of Heber is a type of worldly pleasure, which promises only to betray; and Sisera may be considered as a type of those who trust for happiness in the things of this world.

George. But though Sisera was dead, he was only the general; the king of Hazor might raise another army and come against the Israelites.

Grandfather. He could not; his power was completely broken; for we are told that "God subdued on that day Jabin, the King of Canaan, before the children of Israel." They prospered against him until he was utterly destroyed, and never was that people able to oppose them again.

Marianne. The Israelites would not surely worship false gods again.

Grandfather. For forty years the land had rest; and the people, keeping in remembrance their mercies and deliverances, worshipped the Lord; but, gradually, they forgot their Deliverer, and again worshipped the images in the groves. Trouble again came upon them, to bring them to a recollection of their duty. The Midianites oppressed them grievously,—so grievously that the children of Israel were obliged to live in dens and in caves. They sowed their corn; but at harvest time their enemies came and carried off the whole produce of the soil that they could lay their hands on, besides the sheep and the cattle, so that the Israelites were in a

miserable state of starvation. Still the infatuated people clung to their idols till the Lord raised up another judge, of whom I shall tell you to-morrow evening, if God will.

Johnnie. Did the people live in dens in Shamgar's time? I like him best.

Grandfather. They confined themselves to the fortified cities. The villages and scattered farm-houses were uninhabited, and they did not dare to cultivate their fields for the roving bands of Philistines; nor did they dare to walk on the highways for fear of their enemies,—the travellers went in bye-ways and unfrequented paths. Such was the state of things when the brave Shamgar rose and freed his people from the yoke of the Philistines.

When the Israelites were prosperous they worshipped Baal; when in trouble, they prayed to God,—What do we learn from this?

Othniel first reformed Israel, then went out to war,—What does this teach us?

Barak marched to battle not less willingly though he knew he was to gain no honour by it,—What does this teach us?

By faith Barak hesitated not to quit the strong position he had taken,—What example does he set us here?

Sisera asked Jael to tell a falsehood,—Did this justify her in breaking faith with him? and why?

Of what is Jael a type?

Of whose fate may the fate of Sisera be considered as a type?

GIDEON.

" Dear is the hallow'd morn to me,
When village bells awake the day,
And by their sacred minstrelsy,
Call me from earthly cares away.

" And dear to me the wingèd hour,
Spent in thy hallow'd courts, O Lord,
To feel devotion's soothing power,
And catch the manna of thy word.

" And dear the rustic harmony,
Sung with the pomp of village art;
That holy, heavenly melody,
The music of a thankful heart.

" Oft when the world with iron hands,
Has bound me in its six-days' chain,
This bursts them like the strong man's bands,
And lets my spirit loose again. "

CUNNINGHAM.

THE Sabbaths we spent at our grandfather's were particularly happy days. I never knew any one who seemed so thoroughly to enjoy the Sabbath as grandfather. Every day he was cheerful and kindly, but on the day of rest he seemed to have a special foretaste of the happiness of the Eternal Sabbath, of which he liked so well to speak. It was not exactly a day of rest to him, for the longest walk he ever took was to church; yet, whether

the weather was wet or dry, he never was absent from the place of worship. There was a bank about half way between the cottage and the church—a pretty sunny bank it was—there we used always to rest, if the day was fine, both in going to church and in returning from it. That bank is associated in my mind with peaceful thankful feelings, for there grandfather delighted to dwell upon the ten thousand mercies that were in his lot and in ours. Indeed the whole Sabbath from morning till night his mind seemed to be more filled with thankfulness and praise than on any other day. Could we have more of his loving thankful spirit, our Sabbaths would be holier and happier too.

The second Sabbath that we spent at our grandfather's was one of those very lovely days that we used to see so often in childhood, but see so seldom when childhood is past. In the afternoon grandfather stayed in the house, while we children went out to the garden to sit. While George and I were busy with our Bibles, Johnnie slipped away from us unobserved. We did not miss him till we were called to tea; then George went to seek him, and found him playing on the roadside with some other children. Johnnie came in crying, because George had told him how angry grandfather would be. Grandfather did not look angry, but he seemed sorry, very sorry; for he thought that those who misspent the Sabbath were to be blamed certainly, but to be pitied much more. He truly loved the Sabbath himself, and his earnest desire and constant endeavour was, that every one about him

should love it too; and he knew that we could not love it better than any other day if we did not spend it better than any other day. He took Johnnie into his own room, and spoke to him very seriously, and often afterwards Johnnie said that he never thought what a Sabbath day was till then; but the words he heard then had taught him something of the love grandfather had for it himself.

While this conversation was going on, George and I prepared grandfather's seat on the green, and there we seated ourselves, and waited till he came. When grandfather was seated in his chair, and Johnnie on the grass beside us, we heard the story that we had been promised for that evening.

Grandfather. In the days when the Midianites oppressed the children of Israel, we are told that an angel of the Lord came and sat under an oak which belonged to Joash, who was of the family of Abiezer, and the tribe of Manasseh, that half of the tribe which was settled west of the Jordan. This oak was in a retired spot, and near it Gideon, the son of Joash, was thrashing his wheat. In ordinary times that was not the place he would have chosen to thrash in, but he was glad to do that work in any out of the way corner, that the Midianites might be less likely to see him at it; for he was sure if they did see him, that they would steal his grain. He was busy at his work when the angel of the Lord appeared to him. This teaches us that if we would have blessings from Heaven to descend upon us, we must be

diligent in business. "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour," were the first words spoken to Gideon by his heavenly visitor. The son of Joash expressed surprise at this address. "If the Lord be with us," he said, "why is all this evil come upon us." The angel addressed him alone, but he identifies himself with the whole people of Israel. He did not think anything could be a blessing to him if it did not also bring relief to his suffering brethren. His example here teaches us to love others as we love ourselves. "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?" were the next words spoken by the heavenly being who sat under the oak, who was no created angel, but the eternal Son of God. The humility of Gideon made this speech seem no less strange to him than the former one. How could he save Israel, he said; his family was poor in Manasseh; it was a family of no note even in Manasseh, and the tribe of Manasseh was not powerful; besides this, the son of Joash pleaded that he was the least in his father's house. The reply of the Lord conveyed the very strongest encouragement, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

Humility would have been misplaced after this. Gideon had not been in the least exalted by the praises bestowed upon him; he had not been inclined to trust in his own valour and might; but when the Lord promised to be with him, the difficulty of the task was nothing to him; he shrunk not from it. Here he sets us an example of

faith. Gideon wished to shew respect to the visitor who had honoured him so greatly. He went into his house and brought out a piece of a kid, and cakes of flour, and broth in a vessel, and presented it. His heavenly guest told him to lay the flesh and the cakes on the rock that was near them, and to pour out the broth upon them. Gideon obeyed. Then, with the staff he held in his hand, the visitor touched the food which had been prepared for him. The touch of his staff brought fire from the rock, which consumed the things Gideon had prepared; then the worker of the miracle vanished.

Johnnie. What did he mean, grandfather, by burning the meat and the bread?

Grandfather. It shewed Gideon that he was no mortal man, but a spirit from heaven; it shewed him too that his offering had been accepted by the Lord. At first when the angel vanished he felt alarmed, but the Lord spoke comfortably to him, so he built an altar there, and called it Jehovah-Shalom, which means the Lord peace. That night the Lord spoke to Gideon, commanding him to cut down his father's sacred grove, and throw down the altar of Baal, and build an altar to the Lord on the top of the rock near which the angel appeared to him. There he was to burn the wood of the grove, and offer for a sacrifice his father's young bullock. This was a dangerous task, yet it was performed by Gideon. He did not do it by day, lest he should be interrupted in the doing of it by the idolatrous

men of that city; he took ten of his servants to assist him, and did it in the night.

Marianne. Did Gideon's father worship Baal?

Grandfather. It is plain that he did, and some think that he was a leader in the worship of that false god—perhaps a priest,—and that the altar he had near his house was for the use of the whole town. When the men of that town rose in the morning and saw that their idol, altar, and grove were destroyed, they made a point of discovering by whom this had been done. That could not be very difficult to find out, and as soon as they knew they called on Joash to deliver up his son that they might put him to death.

Marianne. To death, grandfather, because he worshipped God?

Grandfather. For no other reason, so far sunk were these Israelites in idolatry. By their law the man who worshipped false gods was to be put to death. They reversed it here, and would have put to death a man for refusing to worship false gods. Joash would not allow his son to be put to death. He said, if Baal were a god he would avenge himself, and he gave Gideon a new name, Jerubbaal, which means the antagonist of Baal. Probably Gideon had before convinced him that he had a divine commission to do as he had done. About this time the Midianites, Amalekites, and Arabians came from the east in great force, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel, not far from Ophra, the city where Gideon lived. Then a spirit of valour from heaven came upon Gideon;

—he blew a trumpet, and his neighbours flocked round him;—he sent messengers to distant tribes, and they sent recruits to his army. Now Gideon wished to be quite certain whether at this time, by his hand, the Lord would deliver Israel, so he asked a sign. He laid on the ground a fleece of wool, and besought of God that dew might fall on the fleece only, while all round the ground might be dry. The Lord granted his request; but still he feared that it might not be a sign sufficient, though he wrung from the fleece a bowlful of water. It is the tendency of wool to attract moisture to it; so, humbly entreating forgiveness, he besought that the sign might be reversed, that the wool might be dry while the ground was wet with dew. The Lord again granted his prayer, which confirmed the faith of Gideon. He was sure that the Lord was to deliver Israel, that he was to be the honoured instrument, and that that was to be the time.

Gideon and his followers then moved forward, and pitched beside a well not far from the Midianites, who were in the valley below them. The Lord spoke to Gideon there, telling him that the number of his soldiers was too great for the Midianites to be delivered up to them; their leader must proclaim that whoever was afraid might retire. When this proclamation was made twenty-two thousand of the men of Israel withdrew, only ten thousand remaining.

George. That was a very small army, grandfather; could they not have got some more brave men to join them?

Grandfather. It was the will of the Lord at this time to conquer the children of the east by a very small number, and the reason he gives to Gideon for this is expressed in these words, "Lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." Ten thousand men were too many; they must be still further reduced. The Lord directed Gideon how this was to be done. The people were taken down to the water to drink; the greater number bowed down on their knees to drink; three hundred only lifted the water to their mouths in their hands. By direction of the Almighty, Gideon sent away all those who had bowed on their knees to drink, he kept only the three hundred with himself. This was a great trial of Gideon's faith, but it did not waver; his confidence in God could not be shaken.

George. How large was the army of the Midianites, grandfather?

Grandfather. One hundred and thirty-five thousand men.

Johnnie. Why were the soldiers sent away because they bowed down to drink?

Grandfather. It has been thought that by lying down to drink they shewed how eager they were to have their thirst gratified, while those who drank from their hands shewed by that how able they were to endure thirst and fatigue. But the surest reason doubtless is that it was the will of God to reduce the army to a very small number, and this test was used because at a sul-

try season when men after marching were told to drink, there were few who would not drink heartily. That night the Lord again spoke to Gideon, telling him to go down to the enemy's host and take possession. But if he hesitated about taking down his three hundred men, he might go down first with only his servant, and listen to what the Midianites were saying; what he heard would strengthen him for the work that was before him. Gideon and his servant arrived in time to hear a dream that one of the Midianite soldiers was telling another. He had dreamed that he saw a cake of barley bread tumble into the host of Midian, strike upon a tent, and overturn it entirely,—a strange dream certainly, and one with little meaning in it, as we would think; but "interpretations belong to God," and he put into the mind of the Midianite to whom it was told to interpret it in a way more remarkable than the dream itself. "This is nothing else," said the interpreting soldier, "save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel; for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host." You may easily suppose how encouraging this was to Gideon. He devoutly praised the Lord for causing the man to say it, and for permitting him to hear it. He then returned to his three hundred and said, "Arise, for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian." The three hundred obeyed, and were divided by their commander into three companies; every man took a trumpet in one hand, and in the other empty pitchers to carry their lamps in. In the beginning of the

middle watch—that was the second watch, which began at ten—Gideon and his small army arrived at the outside of the camp. They had arrived there in silence, but not in silence did they remain. Each man blew his trumpet, broke his earthen pitcher with a loud crash, held up his lamp that the glare of light might startle the foe, and shouted loudly "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Gideon had seen that his name had already struck terror into the Midianite soldiers; for this reason he caused his men to introduce it along with the great name of Jehovah, without whose aid he felt himself to be nothing. Fear seized on the children of the east; throughout that great army not one had presence of mind to think; every man turned his sword against his own countrymen. Gideon and his little band did not strike a blow, yet thousands of their enemies were slain: those who remained alive fled.

Johnnie. What made them so frightened, grandfather.

Grandfather. It was the Lord who sent terror into their hearts, and the means it pleased him to make use of were the pitchers, the lamps, and the trumpets of the three hundred men. Then those of Gideon's soldiers who had been dismissed gathered together to pursue the host of Midian. The victory which had been won gave boldness to those who had been timid before. Gideon sent messengers to the Ephraimites, telling them to seize the fords of Jordan, that the ememy might not be able to cross over. The men of Ephraim did so, and took

two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb, whom they killed, and sent their heads to Gideon. The names of these princes are curious: Oreb means a crow, and Zeeb a wolf. Some think that they were names given to them in ridicule by the Israelites; but we cannot be sure of that, and it is of no importance. Instead of congratulating Gideon upon his success, and thanking him for the great service he had rendered to them in common with the rest of his brethren, the Ephraimites found great fault with him for not asking them to assist him against the Midianites. Ephraim was jealous of his brother Manasseh. Gideon might have told them that he acted only by the command of God, so he could not be accountable to them; or he might have told them that they ought to have come forward voluntarily if they were willing to oppose the Midianites. But he said none of these things to them, lest he might aggravate their anger, and cause divisions in Israel: he spoke modestly of what he himself had done, and highly commended that which God had enabled the Ephraimites to do. "God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you?" When he had said this, the anger of the men of Ephraim abated. We learn from this that even when we are unjustly blamed we ought to give a mild reply.

George. But it would be impossible to do that, grandfather; Gideon was a very uncommon man.

Grandfather. It is not easy, I grant, to imitate Gideon's

onduct in this respect, but he received strength from God to act aright, and so shall we, if we ask it earnestly. The three hundred men, with their leader, had passed over he Jordan, and though exhausted by fatigue and want f food, were still pursuing the remainder of Midian's ost. In the tribe of Gad is a place called Succoth, here the hungry Israelites asked for food, telling what ork they were engaged in. The men of Succoth scornlly refused bread to their brethren, mocking the idea of hree hundred worn out men conquering the kings of idian. For this conduct Gideon said that when he eturned successful, he would tear their flesh with the horns of the wilderness, and with briars. From thence e went to Penuel, to the men of which he made the same equest, and received the same reply. "When I come gain in peace," he said to the men of Penuel, "I will reak down this tower." When Gideon overtook the ings of Midian, he and his band fell upon them and put ll of them to the sword, except Zebah and Zalmunna he two kings, whom he made prisoners. The victorious on of Joash then went to Succoth, and scourged the hief men of the place with thorns and briars; so he coninced them of their folly. Then he punished the men f Penuel. He was more severe to them; he broke the trong fortress of which they thought so much, and slew heir chief men.

George. They deserved it, I am sure.

Johnnie. Yes, it was very cruel to refuse bread to Gideon and his men when they were so hungry.

George. Especially when they had been fighting for their good. What did Gideon do to Zebah and Zalmunna, grandfather?

Grandfather. He called them before him, and questioned them as to the appearance of some men whom they had slain at mount Tabor, when a former inroad of the Midianites had driven the people of Israel to dens and caves. To Gideon's question the kings replied, "As thou art, so were they, each one resembled the children of a king." "They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother," the conqueror of the Midianites exclaimed. His was the office of avenger of blood, being next of kin to the persons that were slain. He desired his eldest son to put the royal murderers to death; but he, being very young, shrunk from the task; so Gideon with his own hand slew Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian. The Israelites then asked Gideon to be their king, "Rule thou over us," they said, "both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian." Now the children of Israel were under the peculiar government of God; He provided rulers for them, and directed them what to do in every instance. It seemed to Gideon as if they were weary of submission to the divine authority, when they were so desirous of having him for a king. "I will not rule over you," he said, "neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you."

George. But Gideon had taken upon himself to command the people before that?

Grandfather. He had taken the power that was given him by God; he refused it when offered to him by the people. He sets us in this an example of piety and humility: he worked for the glory of God and the good of the people, and sought no reward for himself.

Marianne. What an excellent man Gideon was, grandfather. I think surely he had no faults at all.

Grandfather. He certainly was a good man, a true servant of God, yet in one thing he erred. He collected all the gold ornaments that had been worn by the enemies of the Israelites, and the fine garments that he had taken from the kings; of these he made an ephod or sacred garment, and put it in the city of Ophrah. The people did homage to it as if it had been divine, and even Gideon's own family were led astray by it. This is the only faulty thing related of Gideon.

George. But I do not see that that was his fault; he was not to know that the people would worship the ornaments.

Grandfather. Many of those ornaments were gods of the Midianites, which the Israelites had been in the habit of worshipping before Gideon came to deliver them. Among the things particularly mentioned as used in the making of the ephod, were the ornaments that were on their camels' necks; they were round plates of gold like the moon, images of the goddess Ashtaroth, who represented the moon, as Baal did the sun. When Gideon knew this he ought not to have preserved these things, as the Israelites were so apt to wander from the true

God; he ought to have guarded against the slightest approach to idolatry. This teaches us that it is not enough that our own intentions be pure; we ought to avoid all appearance of evil.

George. Was there any more war in Gideon's time?

Grandfather. No, there was peace while he lived, which was forty years after he had subdued the Midianites. He left seventy-one sons. One of them, named Abimelech, resolved to attain to the sovereignty which his father had rejected. That he might gain this end, nothing was too wicked for him to do. He, cold-blooded murderer as he was, killed all his brethren on one stone, all except the youngest, who escaped by hiding himself.

Marianne. Surely the people would not make him king after he had done that.

Grandfather. They did, for the Israelites were sadly degenerated by the worship of false gods. His principal supporters were the men of Shechem, a city in the tribe of Ephraim. The chief men of it seem to have much resembled himself. They did not long continue to respect the king they had made: in three years they began to deal treacherously with him. The men of Shechem even sent out liers in wait to watch on the country roads for Abimelech, that they might take him prisoner, and they set up over themselves another ruler, Gaal, the son of Ebed. Gaal does not seem to have possessed one good quality; he had a bold tongue and a cowardly heart. When Abimelech heard of the revolt of the Shechemites he marched against them. Gaal made an attempt to go

out to meet him, but soon was glad to betake himself to flight. The next day Abimelech attacked the city, which he took and utterly destroyed, with all the people in it, except those who took refuge in a strong tower near the town, which was an idol temple, the house of the god Beerith. Abimelech then went to a wood, followed by his men; with an axe he cut down a bough from a tree, telling his followers to do the same. They obeyed, and all carried their branches and set them round the tower in which the people had taken refuge. Fire was applied, soon the idol temple was in flames, and all the people whom it contained perished miserably. So were the Shechemites punished.

Marianne. But how was Abimelech punished? They did not deserve it more than he did, I am sure.

Grandfather. Abimelech was first used as an instrument to cut off the wicked men of Shechem, then he was himself cut off. After having taken Shechem, he marched against Thebez, a small city not far from the one he had destroyed. He soon got possession of the town, but all the people secured themselves in a strong tower which was within the place. Abimelech was working about it, trying to set it on fire, when, looking up, he saw a woman aim a stone at him. He saw it, but he could not avoid the death that was appointed him to die. The stone fell on his head and broke his skull. When he knew that this world and all that it contained were fast departing from him, one might have expected that serious thoughts would have occupied his mind. But no,

vain and foolish to the last, his whole care seemed to be how he could avoid having it said of him "a woman slew him." That this might not be said, he told his armour-bearer to draw his sword and kill him, which the young man did.

Marianne. But that would not prevent people saying that a woman had killed him?

Grandfather. No. It only made the manner of his death better known; and this teaches us never to do wrong to avoid disgrace, for it is a sure way of making the disgrace more notorious. Abimelech slew his seventy brethren upon one stone, and one stone came to him carrying his death warrant; so remarkably did his sin resemble his punishment. It is sad, my children, to think of the death of a hardened sinner like Abimelech. We shall close this subject for to-night with a prayer that we may not delay repentance till it be too late.

Gideon was thrashing his corn when the angel appeared to him,—What does this teach us?

Gideon did not think that could be a blessing to him which did not also bring a blessing to all his people,—What do we learn from this?

When the Lord promised to be with him, Gideon did not shrink from the task that was before him,—Of what does he set us an example here?

What do we learn from the answer Gideon gave to the men of Ephraim's accusation?

Gideon took the power that was given him by God;

he refused it when offered by the people,—What do we learn from his example?

Gideon made an ephod which became a snare to the people,—What does this teach us?

By attempting in a sinful manner to conceal the instrument of his death, Abimelech made it better known,—What are we taught by this?

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS.

" I can do all things, or can bear
All sufferings, if my Lord be there;
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains,
While his own hand my head sustains.

" But if the Lord be once withdrawn,
And we attempt the work alone;
When new temptations spring and rise,
We find how great our weakness is.

" So Samson, when his hair was lost,
Met the Philistines to his cost;—
Shook his vain limbs with sad surprise,—
Made feeble fight, and lost his eyes."

WATTS.

The next evening found George, Johnnie, and I seated in our usual places waiting for our story. As soon as grandfather had taken his seat he began as follows :—

Grandfather. The people to whom next was given power to scourge the Israelites were the children of Ammon. For eighteen years they vexed and oppressed the chosen people. Then the sons of Jacob cried to the Lord; they humbly confessed that they had sinned;

they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord. The Ammonites assembled an army and marched into Gilead, that part of the country of the Israelites which lay nearest to them. The Israelites too assembled an army, and asked Jephthah the Gileadite to be their captain. Jephthah, after spreading the whole matter before God in prayer, beseeching from Him direction how to act, and a blessing upon his undertakings,—after doing this, the Gileadite entered upon his duties as leader of the armies of Israel. Let us imitate the example of Jephthah in commencing all our undertakings with prayer.

George. Was Jephthah a brave man, grandfather?

Grandfather. We are told that he was a mighty man of valour. Yet, though fearless in war, Jephthah did not love war for its own sake; he desired peace when it could be innocently obtained. It is no mark of a cowardly spirit to use every lawful means of keeping out of strife. Jephthah sent messengers to ask the king of the Ammonites why he had come to fight against the children of Israel. The king of Ammon probably never before thought of a reason why he fought against the Israelites; it was enough for him that he enriched himself with their spoil; whether it was just to do so he did not consider, but it is easy to find an excuse for what we wish to do; so when Jephthah sent to ask a reason for his conduct, the king of the children of Ammon managed to find one which at first sight appeared reasonable enough. He said that the Israelites

had taken away his lands, and he wished them peaceably restored. To this Jephthah replied that Israel had taken away no land from the children of Ammon. Sihon, the Amorite, had dispossessed the Ammonites of their country, that part of it at least that lay between the rivers Arnon and Jabbok. This was no concern of the Israelites; they were not to be expected to reconquer the land that they might bestow it on the children of Ammon.

Marianne. But had they not the land that the Ammonites asked for?

George. Yes. They took it from Sihon and made it their own.

Grandfather. They did. But you will remember that it was Sihon who began the war. The children of Israel sent to ask him to allow them to pass through his land; he not only refused, but marched with an army out into the wilderness to attack them. The Lord gave Sihon, king of Heshbon, with his army, into the hands of the children of Israel, and commanded them to take possession of his land. God can give nothing that is not his own, for to him all things belong. What he bestows, it is good that we thankfully receive. Thus Jephthah pleaded; and, besides, he had this to say against the Ammonites' claim, that the children of Israel had now been in possession of the land for three hundred years; and the sons of Ammon had not hitherto attempted to dispossess them of it, and had made no pretension of having a right to it. It shewed that the Israelites

must have been conducting themselves very inoffensively, when their enemies required to go back three hundred years to find a pretext for quarrelling with them.

George. Had they been three hundred years in Canaan? What year was this in?

Grandfather. It was not quite three hundred years since the Israelites came into possession of the land; but we may suppose it was fully three hundred years since the Ammonites had lost it. This year, in which Jephthah arose to defend the children of Israel from the incursions of the children of Ammon, was the year two thousand eight hundred and seventeen after the creation of the world—one thousand one hundred and eighty-seven before the birth of Christ. To the reasoning of Jephthah the Ammonites paid no attention; so there was no alternative—there must be war. Jephthah vowed that when he returned in peace from the Ammonite war, the first thing that came out of his house to meet him would be the Lord's; he would offer it up for a burnt-offering. Against the children of Ammon then did Jephthah march, and the God whom he served delivered them into his hands. He first defeated them in the field, and then pursued them to their cities, where he cut off all who opposed him. So the children of Ammon were punished for their unprovoked cruelty to the children of Israel. When Jephthah returned to his house at Mizpah, in the land of Gilead, his daughter, his only child, came out joyfully to welcome him. "Alas, my daughter," he cried, "thou hast brought me very low,

and thou art one of them that trouble me; for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back." "My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord," said Jephthah's daughter, "do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; for as much as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon." She only asked that she might be allowed two months to bewail her virginity, on the mountains, with her companions. That time was given to her, and at the end of two months her father did with her according to his vow.

Marianne. Offered up his daughter for a burnt-offering! surely that could not be right?

Grandfather. It is not generally thought that he put his daughter to death, but that he consecrated her to the service of the Lord; bound her to live like a nun, spending all her life in seclusion.

Marianne. But surely that could not be all, grandfather; there was no need for Jephthah and his daughter making so much lamentation about it.

Grandfather. It was promised to the Israelites that from them the Messiah was to descend; therefore it was looked on as a thing very much to be lamented when a man died without leaving any descendants, and this daughter of Jephthah's was the only child he had. However, there is difference of opinion on this subject; but it is a matter, the settlement of which does not much concern us. From the example of Jephthah's daughter

all children may learn to submit cheerfully to those whom God has set over them.

The battles of Jephthah had not yet come to an end. The Ephraimites in great force crossed the Jordan, and called Jephthah to account for not asking them to assist him when he went against the Ammonites; for this neglect of his they threatened to burn him and his house together.

George. The Ephraimites were strange people; they made the same complaint once before.

Grandfather. Yes, this was the second time that Ephraim was jealous of his brother Manasseh. They first complained of Gideon, who belonged to that half of the tribe of Manasseh which was settled west of the Jordan; now they complained of Jephthah, who belonged to the half tribe of Manasseh which was settled east of the Jordan. Because Jacob, in blessing the two sons of Joseph, said that Ephraim, the younger brother, was to become a greater nation than his elder brother Manasseh, the children of Ephraim thought that in every thing they were to have the pre-eminence over the descendants of Manasseh. To this complaint of the men of Ephraim the reply made by Jephthah was not so remarkable for its gentleness as that made by Gideon on a like occasion; but the words of the Gileadite were remarkable for their honesty and truth. The accusation, he said, was untrue, for he had called the sons of Ephraim to assist him and his people against the children of Ammon. They gave him no assistance, so that his army was small, and he, along with his followers,

were exposed to the greater danger on that account. The honour of the victory he did not take to himself; it was the Lord, he said, who had delivered the Ammonites into his hand. The haughty sons of Ephraim were determined to have war; for they abused not Jephthah only, but all the Gileadites, his followers. They fought, and Ephraim was defeated by the men of Gilead. Those who came so eager for war were glad then to save themselves by flight. But escape was denied them. They must cross the Jordan to reach their home, and the Gileadites, whom they had insulted, were waiting at the fords to prevent them from passing over. The Ephraimites had been proud of their powerful tribe, now they were glad to deny that they belonged to it; but even that cowardly trick did not save their lives. The Gileadites did not trust their word; they had a plan to prove whether or not what they said was true. When a suspected person appeared at the ford, the waiting Gileadites put the question, "Art thou an Ephraimite?" If he said he was not, they told him to say Shibboleth, which the Ephraimites were certain to pronounce Sibboleth. This was a sure way of discovering them, and all who were discovered were slain on the spot. It seems cruel to make such a slaughter among them, yet doubtless they deserved it, and Jephthah considered it a necessary act of justice. Of the sons of Ephraim there fell at this time forty-two thousand. The fate of this proud tribe teaches us how true is the proverb which says that "a haughty spirit goes before a fall."

George. Did Jephthah fight any more battles, grandfather?

Grandfather. We hear of no more battles that he fought. For six years he judged Israel, then he died. The next fighting of which we hear was the most remarkable feud that the world ever saw. A warrior fought alone, entirely unassisted by man; by the strength of his arm his enemies fell in crowds round him.

Johnnie. What was his name, grandfather?

Grandfather. Samson.

George. Samson! Oh, I should like to hear all about him.

Grandfather. I shall give you a history of him, then. His whole life was a war. In the town of Zorah, in the tribe of Dan, lived a man of the name of Manoah. To his wife and to himself also an angel appeared to announce the birth of a son, who was to be a Nazarite from the day that he was born.

George. What is a Nazarite?

Grandfather. A Nazarite was one who was set apart for the service of God in a peculiar manner. They bound themselves by a vow to taste no wine nor strong drink of any kind, and not to cut the hair of their heads. People took this vow of their own accord, for a week, or for a month, or for any length of time that they chose. The son of Manoah was born a Nazarite, and was commanded to continue so during his life. He was called Samson, which means a little sun. When very young he began to signalize himself, but we have no particulars of

his early feats. The first remarkable action of which we are told was performed by him when on his way to Timnath with his father and mother. Timnath was a town in the tribe of Judah, but it was inhabited, in part at least, by Philistines, to whom, at this time, the Israelites were tributary. Samson had seen a Philistine woman in Timnath whom he wished to marry. His father and mother were by no means pleased with the match, but to gratify him they agreed to it, and accompanied him to the place where she lived to make arrangements about it. On the way Manoah and his wife kept the high way, while Samson sauntered through the vineyards. A fierce young lion, roaring for his prey, fixed his eye on Samson. The young Danite seized the monarch of the woods, and strangled him as easily as if he had been a kid, without either knife or stick in his hand. Of this great feat Samson did not boast in the least; he did not even tell his father and his mother of it. We ought to learn modesty from his example. Some time after that Samson, with his father and mother, were again on their way to Timnath. His marriage was to take place at this time. Curiosity led him into the vineyards, to see if anything remained of the lion that he had killed. The skeleton was there, and of it a swarm of bees had made a hive, which they had filled with honey. Samson took some honey out with his hands, no more afraid of the bees than he had been of the lion; he ate of the honey himself, and gave to his father and mother. It was customary at the marriages of the Jews to have a

feast which lasted for seven days. Samson followed the ordinary custom, and his bride's relations brought him thirty young men to keep him company. That these young men might have something to occupy their minds, Samson said he would give them a riddle. If they found it out before the seven days of the feast were ended, he would give to each of the thirty a complete suit of clothes; if they did not find it out, each of the thirty must give him a suit of clothes. The young Philistines agreed to these terms, so Samson propounded the riddle, "Out of the eater came forth meat; out of the strong came forth sweetness."

Johnnie. Did they find out the riddle, grandfather, in the seven days?

Grandfather. No, they did not find it out at all.

Johnnie. That was very stupid.

George. Do you know it, Master Jack?

Johnnie. No, I do not know it yet.

George. Then why do you call them stupid?

Johnnie. If I had tried for seven days to find it out, and if I had had twenty-nine people to help me, I would perhaps have found it out.

Grandfather. Whether they were stupid or not, we are certain that they were thirty as cowardly and barbarous men as could be found any where. So much were they vexed that they could not find out the riddle, that they were actually so unmanly as to threaten to burn to death the bride with all her relations, if she did not find out the riddle and tell it to them.

Johnnie. But how could they expect her to find out the riddle when they could not do it themselves?

Grandfather. They meant her to ask her husband, which she did, and teased him so much and so long that he told her the meaning of the riddle. She went straight to her own countrymen and told it to them. So on the seventh day of the feast they were able to come to Samson with the answer, "What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?"

Johnnie. Was that the answer, grandfather? I do not understand the riddle at all.

Grandfather. You remember of the honey that Samson found in the skeleton of the lion; that was meat coming out of the eater, and the sweetest of food coming out of the strongest of animals.

Marianne. But the Philistines did not find out the riddle themselves. Samson would not be obliged to give them the suits of clothes that he had promised in case they found it out; they did not deserve them.

Grandfather. Samson knew that they had taken a base method to find out the answer to the riddle, so that they were not justly entitled to the garments, but he did not refuse to give them. He went to Askelon, a town of the Philistines; there he slew thirty men, and gave their garments to the thirty young men at Timnath.

Marianne. That was a strange thing to do, grandfather. These other thirty men had not done him any harm.

Grandfather. You must remember that Samson was

raised up by God to punish the Philistines for the injuries they had inflicted upon Israel; his connection with them was permitted, that he might injure them the more. After this Samson being much displeased with the conduct of his new relations, went home to his father's house for some time. When he came again to see his wife he brought a kid to her, as a token that there was to be peace between them. His father-in-law refused to let him see her, telling him that she had got another husband, and that he could take her younger sister if he liked. Thus a cause was given to Samson for doing harm to the Philistines, and he took a strange way of injuring them. He took three hundred foxes and fastened them in couples, tail to tail, and put a firebrand between each pair of tails. When he let them go, they ran in among the Philistines' corn and set it on fire, both what had been cut and what was still standing. It was in the time of wheat harvest, so that all the corn was ripe, and would be quite dry. Besides burning the corn, the firebrands set on fire the vines and olive trees. Samson was moved to do this by God, for the Philistines deserved this, and more than this, because they had so long abused the good gifts of the Almighty in giving them as offerings to their false gods. The Philistines did not dare to revenge this injury upon Samson himself, but they seized his wife and father-in-law, and burnt them to death. Thus strangely did the very death she had sinned to avoid come upon this wife of Samson. Her fate teaches us that we ought on no account to do what is wrong, even

though it be to avoid the greatest of dangers. Samson then fell upon the Philistines and slew a great many of them, and afterwards he retired to the top of the rock Etam, a strong place in the tribe of Judah, to the top of which two men could not go abreast. While he staid there the Philistines assembled a large army and pitched in Judah. The men of Judah asked them what they wanted. To bind Samson they said they had come. Then three thousand men of the tribe of Judah went up the rock Etam, and asked Samson what he meant by irritating their masters, and so bringing evil upon his own people. Those cowardly Israelites were not ashamed to tell the only man who fought for their deliverance, that they were come to bind him and give him into the hands of his enemies, who they knew would put him to death.

George. But Samson would not let them bind him; even three thousand men could not conquer him.

Grandfather. He could have resisted if he had chosen, but he did not. After his countrymen had promised that they would do nothing to him themselves, he permitted them to bind him. Two new cords they used for the purpose, that he might be bound securely. The Philistines shouted for joy when they saw their great enemy in their power, as they thought. But it was not long that they had cause to rejoice. No sooner was Samson amongst them than the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he broke the strong cords that bound him as easily as we would break flax that has been burnt. Then he took up a jaw bone of an ass

that lay near, and with it he slew a thousand men. If they offered to resist, their resistance was vain; but it is very probable that they were paralyzed by terror at his wonderful strength, and the suddenness of his attack. In memory of this achievement, Samson gave a new name to the place where it happened; he called it Ramath Lehi, which means the lifting up of the jaw bone. Lest he should be exalted in his own strength, and forget the God from whom he derived it all, immediately after this he was made to suffer greatly from thirst, so that he was like to die for want of water. In his distress he cried to God, who answered him by causing a fountain of water to spring up in a hollow place that was beside. Thankfully he drank of it, and called the fountain Enhakkore, which means the well of him that cried.

The next great feat that Samson performed was in Gaza, a town which had belonged to the tribe of Judah, but had fallen into the hands of the Philistines. As soon as the people of Gaza knew that Samson was in their town, they locked their gates, and set guards to seize him when he made an attempt to leave. To the gates the Danite went, and lifted these strong doors with their posts and bars; he put them on his shoulders and carried them to the top of a hill, where his own countrymen from Hebron could see them to their comfort, and his enemies from Gaza could see them to their confusion. The Philistines now became convinced that if they conquered Samson at all it must be by stratagem.

So they fell upon their old trick, that of getting a woman on their side. They bribed a woman called Delilah to find out where his great strength lay. If she could succeed in getting him to tell her this secret, they promised each to give her eleven hundred pieces of silver.

George. How much would that be altogether in our money?

Grandfather. There were five of the lords of the Philistines, rulers of their five chief cities, so that it would be fifty-five hundred shekels of silver which they promised; this amounts in our coin to about three hundred and forty-three pounds fifteen shillings. Delilah was one of those contemptible characters who love money above all things, so she did her utmost to earn the reward of treachery. Samson told her first that if he were bound with seven green withes that were never dried, he would be as weak as any man. The lords of the Philistines brought her the withes,—she bound him with them,—brought men into the room to take him, and called out, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson." As easily as tow is broken when it touches the fire, Samson broke the withes that bound him. Delilah complained that he had mocked her, and besought him to tell her the truth. He said that if he were bound with new ropes that never had been used, he would be weak. She got the ropes, bound him, and brought in the Philistines to seize him. The strong ropes were like a thread on Samson's arms, he broke them so easily. Again Delilah fell upon him with her flatteries,

and besought him to tell her the truth. "If thou weavest," he said, "the seven locks of my head with the web." When he was asleep she wove his hair into the web, and fastened it firmly. "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson," she called. He rose, and so strong was his hair that he carried off with it the web into which it was woven, and the pin that fastened it. Although Delilah saw that she had been mocked three times, she did not cease her attempt to find out in what Samson's great strength lay. She pressed him daily, and urged him so that he had no rest; and he was at last prevailed upon to tell her the truth. He had been a Nazarite, he told her, from his birth; and if his hair were taken from him he would lose his strength.

Marianne. Why did he tell her that, when he knew she would give him up to the Philistines? It was not right in Samson.

Grandfather. It was very wrong, and he suffered for it severely.

Johnnie. But what difference could the having long hair make to his strength? I do not understand it.

Grandfather. It could make no difference in itself, but the command had come from God that the hair of Samson's head was neither to be cut nor shaven. To neglect this was disobedience to a divine command; and He who gave the command justly punished the disobedience of it, by taking away the strength that was his gift. We may learn from this that we cannot expect the blessing of God to be with us unless we attend

to everything that He requires, however unimportant it may seem to us. When Samson told Delilah that the losing of his hair only could weaken him, she saw that it was the real truth. She called for the lords of the Philistines, and told them to bring money with them, for this time she was sure that they would get their enemy. They came;—and while Samson was sleeping, a man shaved his head. When Delilah called, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson," he awoke, and rose up, but his strength was gone,—the Lord had departed from him. The Philistines seized him, put out his eyes, and took him to Gaza. There they bound him with fetters of brass, and confined him in the prison, where they made him grind corn in a hand-mill. This was very hard work, and it was a common mode of punishing offenders in those days, before wind-mills and water-mills were invented.

Johnnie. Did they keep Samson long in the prison?

Grandfather. We are not told the exact length of time, but he was only freed from confinement by death. The Philistines made a great feast to Dagon, their god. This Dagon was a strange image, with a head like a man, and a tail like a fish. Yet these ignorant Philistines believed that this object which they worshipped had given Samson into their hands. Their readiness to give the honour of their success to their false god teaches us to be more careful in ascribing the praise in all things to our God,—the living and the true God. It was a proud day for the Philistines when they assembled

in the temple of Dagon, and brought in their enemy, once so formidable, released from his prison and from his labour, that they might insult him by making sport of him. The sightless son of Manoah asked the lad who led him to put his hands upon the pillars which supported the house, that he might lean upon them. The lad obeyed. Then Samson called to the Lord;—his prayer was not loud, but it was earnest. These were the words of it:—"Oh Lord God, remember me, I pray thee; and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, oh God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes."

This prayer was heard, and answered in the moment of its utterance. Strength, as great as he ever had, was given to Samson. He bowed down with all his might, and broke the strong pillars that supported the idol temple, so that the whole fabric fell to the ground, and all the people it contained were killed.

George. How many people were there in it?

Grandfather. We are told that the house was full of men and women, and that there were three thousand on the roof: they had placed themselves there that they might be amused by seeing their blind enemy. Their sudden death should be a warning to us never to mock those who have been unfortunate, for it was when the Philistines were so engaged that destruction came upon them.

Marianne. Was it right, grandfather, for Samson to kill himself and all those people?

Grandfather. He died as a patriot for the good of

his country; and there is no doubt that the manner in which he met with his death was approved of by God, seeing it is recorded that strength to perform his last act was given him in answer to prayer.

Johnnie. How did anybody know what Samson said in his prayer?—nobody heard it.

Grandfather. God heard it, and he revealed it to the inspired writer of Samson's history.

Marianne. Was Samson's prayer a good prayer, grandfather? He prayed for vengeance on his enemies.

Grandfather. They were the obstinate enemies of God and of his people. Had they not been so, it would have been wrong to pray that they might be punished. Then Samson prayed as a prophet,—the Lord put it into his heart so to pray; that by putting honour upon the last scene of His servant's life, He might shew that He had forgiven him. Samson was buried by his brethren in his father's burying place. He had judged Israel twenty years.

Jephthah besought direction from God before he entered upon his duties as leader of the Israelites,—What do we learn from this?

Jephthah's daughter unhesitatingly yielded to the performance of her father's vow,—What does this teach?

What may we learn from the fate of the proud tribe of Ephraim?

Samson killed a young lion, but did not tell his father

or his mother of it,—What may we learn from his example?

What are we taught by the fate of Samson's wife?

Samson, in losing his hair, lost his great strength,—What may we learn from this?

The Philistines ascribed the honour of their success to their false god,—What does this teach us?

What may the sudden destruction of the tormentors of Samson warn us to avoid?

THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL.

" Short be your sleep, and coarse your fare,
In vain, till God has blest;
But if his smiles attend your care,
You shall have food and rest.

" Nor children, relatives, nor friends
Shall real blessings prove,
Nor all the earthly joys he sends,
If sent without his love."

WATTS.

Grandfather. The year after the death of Samson, the Israelites, being weary of the yoke imposed on them by the Philistines, resolved to make an attempt to free themselves from it. They marched out to fight against them. The Philistines met them in battle, and were victorious. Four thousand of the Israelites fell; those who remained retired to their camp.

Marianne. Why were they defeated, grandfather? It was right to try to free themselves from the Philistines.

Grandfather. It was; but they ought first to have

repented of those sins which had brought the Philistines' oke upon them. They ought to have turned to the ord with all their heart; when they did not do so ey did not deserve to win. After they had been de- ated they ought to have humbled themselves, and nfessed the evil they had done. Instead of which, they ought the ark into the camp, expecting that it would ve them from being again overcome by their enemies.

Marianne. But was it not good in them to do that?

Grandfather. No; for they were forbidden to remove e ark after it was placed at Shiloh; and even had that t been the case, they would have been wrong, for to pect that they would be victorious because they had ken the ark into the camp, was trusting in an action their own, and not in the blessing of God. All who ust in outward forms, without seeking that their hearts pure before God, are like these Israelites. Religion ust be in the heart, if it exist at all.

George. Were the Israelites beaten again?

Grandfather. When the ark came into the camp all e men of Israel shouted for joy; but the Philistines ared, and said one to another, "God is come into the mp. Woe unto us, for there hath not been such a ing heretofore. Woe unto us, who shall deliver us t of the hand of these mighty gods? these are the ds that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in e wilderness." They shewed their ignorance in think- g it a strange thing that God had come into the camp, e who fills all space at all times. Little better could

have been expected from the worshippers of Dagon, but better might have been expected from the chosen people than to look upon the ark as their god. The Philistines did not suffer themselves to be overcome by terror; they resolved to exert themselves and fight the more bravely, the more danger there was of their being overcome. A second time Israel was smitten by the Philistines, smitten with a very great slaughter, for of the children of Israel thirty thousand footmen fell, and the remnant, quite dispirited, gave up all thoughts of opposing again their victorious enemy. The ark was taken by the Philistines, and the two sons of the high priest were slain. This was sad news for all Israel to hear, but it was particularly sad for Shiloh, the town where the ark had been kept, and where the high priest lived. Thither ran a fugitive from the army, with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head. Eli the high priest, an old man of ninety-eight, sat by the road side at the entrance of the city, anxious, very anxious, for the ark of God. The fugitive soldier dreaded to tell him the terrible tidings. He passed him—he could easily pass him, for the old man's eyes were dim—ran into the city, and proclaimed it there. One cry of anguish, a cry that came from many voices, told the city's grief. The high priest asked the meaning of the loud lamentations that he heard, and he must be told. Still the messenger shrunk from telling him the tale. "I am he that came out of the army," said the soldier of Israel, "and I fled to-day out of the army." "What is there done, my son?" said Eli. The simple question must be simply replied

to; there was no use in trying to evade it. Few words sufficed to tell the tale of Israel's disgrace. Thus the messenger replied, "Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken." The most disastrous loss was related the last. Eli bore up under the others, but when mention was made of the ark of God, his heart died within him, he fainted away, fell from his seat beside the city gate, and was killed by the fall.

Johnnie. Was Eli a good man?

Grandfather. He was a very good man, but he had provoked the displeasure of the Lord, because his sons were very wicked, and he did not punish them for it. For this it had been declared to him from the Lord that judgments were to come upon his house, that his sons were to meet with an untimely fate, and that the office of the high priest was to be taken from his family. All these predictions came to pass at the time appointed.

George. Did the Philistines keep the ark long in their country?

Grandfather. They did not dare to keep it long, it wrought such havoc among them. They took it first to the town of Ashdod, and put it in the temple of Dagon that was there. The next morning when they entered the temple, they saw the image of Dagon lying flat on its face before the ark of the Lord. They lifted their god, and set him in his place again. The morning after, when

they went early to the temple of their god, they saw the image again fallen down, with both its head and hands off; there only remained the stump or tail, the part of Dagon that was like a fish. Besides the disgrace that was thrown upon their god, the people of Ashdod were smitten with sore diseases, so they resolved to get rid of the ark. It was agreed that it should be carried to Gath. The same calamities attended it there; many of the inhabitants died, so they carried it to Ekron. When the Ekronites saw it coming, they cried out—"They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people." They called on the lords of the Philistines, and told them to send the ark away to its own place, for the hand of God was very heavy upon the people.

Johnnie. But why did they always take it into a town? They should have put it far away from all the houses.

Grandfather. Some tell us that they did try that, and that multitudes of mice sprung up from the ground, and destroyed the corn, which was now nearly ripe. Seven months the Philistines had the ark, and they had far greater cause of rejoicing for its departure than for its arrival. They made a new cart, and tied to it two milk cows, which never had before been yoked. The ark was put in the cart, and the Philistines said to each other, that if the cows took the direct road to the land of Israel, they would then know that the plagues that had afflicted them had come from the God of Israel. They took the

straight way, lowing as they went, for they were leaving their calves behind them. The people of Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley,—they looked up and saw the ark coming along the highway. It was a joyful sight to them. With thankful hearts they offered burnt offerings and sacrifices to the Lord. Let us follow the example of these men of Bethshemesh, and prize highly the possession of the word of God, even the gospel of truth. But the Bethshemites sinned in looking into the ark, for which more than fifty thousand of them were smitten with death. Let us be taught by their fate to avoid their sin, and always to speak and think of sacred things with reverence and humility.

It was twenty years before the Philistines and the Israelites again met on the battle field. All that time the children of Israel were subject to the Philistines. They dreaded the thought of attempting to regain their freedom. Samuel went about among the people, and preached to them to put away their false gods, and to turn to the Lord with all their heart, and that if they did so, then would the Lord deliver them out of the hand of the Philistines. The people, humbled by their sufferings, benefited by the words of Samuel; their false gods they destroyed, their altars they demolished. Samuel then told the people to assemble at Mizpeh, that he might pray for them there. They went, and when the Philistines heard of their gathering, they assembled an army, and marched into the land of Israel. The sons of Jacob had no sooner collected to pray than they were called to fight. They

asked Samuel to cry to the Lord for them. He did so, and the Lord heard him. When the two armies encountered each other on the field, the Lord caused a dreadful thunder storm to discomfit the Philistines, so the Israelites were victorious. Samuel took a stone and called it Ebenezer, the stone of help, for he said, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." By this victory the children of Israel were freed from the yoke of the Philistines, and the hand of the Lord was against these worshippers of Dagon all the days of Samuel. However, Israel had other enemies. It was only the year after that on which the Philistines were subdued that Nahash the Ammonite encamped against Jabesh-Gilead.

Marianne. Had the Israelites been doing what was not right, that an enemy came against them?

Grandfather. They had done wrong in being dissatisfied with the mode of government appointed for them by God; they desired a king, like the nations around them.

George. But what harm was there in wishing for a king?

Grandfather. The people of Israel were under the direct government of God, and to desire a king was rejecting his authority. For that reason it was wrong; yet the Lord designed to govern his people by kings, for, nearly four hundred years before this, he had caused Moses to write directions for the king who was to be set over the people.

George. How did they choose their king?

Grandfather. The Lord chose him; he selected one, the

first acts of whose reign promised well for future greatness. The Ammonites, as I told you, had besieged Jabesh-Gilead, a city in the tribe of Gad, east from the Jordan. The people of the place wished to make a covenant with Nahash, the leader of the Ammonites. They offered to submit upon terms. The terms proposed by Nahash were so very harsh that they hesitated about agreeing to them. "On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel." Such was the proposition of the haughty Ammonite. The men of Jabesh-Gilead asked for seven days' respite, that they might send messengers through the land of Israel to see if their brethren would come to their assistance. If at the end of seven days succour did not arrive, they would submit to the conditions that Nahash imposed.

Johnnie. Why did Nahash wish to put out their eyes? What good could that do him?

Grandfather. It rendered them unfit for war.

Marianne. But it was only their right eyes that he threatened to put out, that would not make them blind —why did he not put out both their eyes?

Grandfather. The right eye only was used in fighting, as the shield was held over the left, and putting out of both eyes would have made the people unable to work, and then they could not have paid any tribute to Nahash. Through the land the messengers from Jabesh-Gilead travelled, and, among other places, they went to Gibeah, a city in the tribe of Benjamin, where lived Saul, the

newly elected king. Although a king, he followed the occupation to which he had been accustomed. He was coming out of the field after his herds, when he heard a noise of weeping and lamenting. He asked the reason, and in reply was told the tidings that had come from Jabesh-Gilead. His indignation was roused. He took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in pieces, and employed messengers to carry these pieces through all the coasts of Israel, saying to the people, "Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen." The Spirit of the Lord guided Saul, so that he acted wisely. The fear of the Lord was on the people, so that they obeyed willingly. This shews us that it is the wisdom that cometh from above that teaches how to command as well as how to obey. When the people had assembled, as the king commanded, he numbered his forces, and found that they amounted to three hundred thousand of the men of Israel, and thirty thousand of the men of Judah. Without delay, he sent off the messengers who had come from Jabesh-Gilead to comfort their distressed townsmen with these words, "To-morrow by that time the sun be hot, ye shall have help." Saul was better than his word; he came before he had promised. He divided his men into three companies, and in the morning watch, before the men of Nahash had roused themselves from their slumbers, the children of Israel fell upon the children of Ammon, and utterly destroyed their army. By this victory the people's opinion of Saul was raised considerably, and they spoke to Samuel

about putting to death all those who had ventured to speak slightingly of the new king. This came to Saul's ears, and he spoke nobly. These were his words: "There shall not a man be put to death this day, for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel." This teaches us that the mercy of the Lord towards ourselves should incline us to shew mercy to others.

Marianne. I think Saul was a very good king, grandfather. I always thought that he had been a bad man.

Grandfather. He commenced his reign well, but it was not long before he fell off sadly. As long as he followed the directions of God, by his prophet Samuel, he did what was right; but when he attempted to manage for himself, he mismanaged grievously. In the second year of his reign he chose three thousand men to be with him and his son; the rest of the people he dismissed,—an act of partiality which affronted the great body of the people. Then he excited the Philistines to make war upon him, by attacking one of their garrisons. That warlike nation gathered in great force to revenge themselves upon the Israelites. They had thirty thousand chariots, six thousand horsemen, and people as numerous as the sand on the sea shore. The number of chariots seems rather incredible. Some make it only three thousand; others account for the thirty thousand by supposing that the greater number were carriages for conveying baggage, and only a small part of them chariots of war. Instead of uniting and meeting the danger bravely, the men of Israel hid themselves in

thickets, in caves among the rocks, and in pits in the ground. Many of them sought for safety in fleeing from the foe across the Jordan, and even those who staid with Saul were trembling and afraid. Samuel had appointed Saul to wait for him seven days at Gilgal. Saul waited till the seventh day came, but had not patience to wait till it was ended. He had the presumption to offer a burnt-offering himself. Scarcely had he done this when Samuel came and reproved him for it, and told him that the Lord had rejected him from being king, and had chosen another man whom he was to make captain over his people.

Marianne. I do not understand very well, grandfather, why it was so wrong in Saul to offer a burnt-offering without Samuel being there.

Grandfather. It was the command of God that nothing of the kind should be done till Samuel came; and the sentence that was passed upon Saul for this disobedience teaches us, that by neglecting to obey the commands of God in any one thing, we forfeit our title to the heavenly kingdom, which is prepared for the just.

George. What did Saul do after Samuel had told him that he was to lose the kingdom?

Grandfather. He numbered his army and found that he had only six hundred men, and quite unarmed, for not a single man had a sword or a spear, except the king himself and his son. Neither was there an Israelite who could supply them with any of these things, for the Philistines obliged them to go to them to get all

their iron work done. So there was not a smith in all the land of Israel.

Marianne. Was not that a strange thing for the Philistines to do?

George. Not strange at all. Cyrus did the same to the Lydians when he conquered them, and other conquerors have done it too.

Grandfather. It was not so strange that the Philistines should desire to prevent the men of Israel from making implements of iron; but it was strange that the Israelites submitted to it. It was very weak in them to yield to such tyranny. It made them very defenceless at this time, when detached parties from the Philistines were laying waste their country, and plundering their people. The Israelites, for their sins, suffered from terror and oppression. But although terror weighed down the spirits of almost all the men of Israel, there was at least one whose brave heart was not cowed: it was Jonathan, the son of Saul. The king and his six hundred men sought a sequestered place to stay in, where no one was likely to spy them out; but Jonathan did not think of hiding from his enemies; his thoughts were of attacking them. He did not tell his father nor any one, except his armour-bearer, whom he asked to go with him to the Philistines' garrison.

George. Why did he not take all the army with him; two men could do nothing against so many?

Grandfather. The others would have been afraid to

go, they stood in such awe of the Philistines, and very likely Saul would have forbidden his son to go had he been informed of the enterprise beforehand. Two men with faith in God can do more than two thousand without that strengthening faith. This Jonathan knew, as we see by what he said to his armour-bearer,—"Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us; for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." The armour-bearer was quite willing to go wherever his master led. Yet Jonathan wished to do nothing rashly. He thought it would be wrong needlessly to throw away his own life and that of his faithful follower. He thought of a plan for ascertaining whether or not it was right to attack the garrison. This was his plan: He and his companion were to discover themselves to the Philistines. If they asked them to stay till they came to them, then they would not go up to attack them; but if the Philistines told them to go up, the two Israelites were to regard that as a sign that the Lord had delivered the heathen into their hands.

George. That was a strange plan. They would have had more chance of success if they had taken the Philistines by surprise.

Grandfather. It might have seemed presumptuous in Jonathan to attack the enemy with only one man to assist him, unless he was quite sure it was the will of God he should do so; and he knew that God could make his will known to him even by a Philistine. When

the two Israelites shewed themselves at the foot of the rocks where their enemies' garrison was stationed, the Philistines looked down upon them and said one to another, "Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves." To the Hebrews, whom they so despised, they called out, "Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing;"—as if these two Hebrews were idle wanderers with nothing to do but gaze about them. The Philistines little knew the sort of men to whom they spoke. When Jonathan heard them speak thus, he said to his armour-bearer, "Come up after me, for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel." It was a very steep rock on which the Philistines were posted,—so steep that Jonathan and his armour-bearer had to climb it on their hands and knees. One might think it would have been easy for their numerous enemies to have driven them down the rock before they got to their feet upon the top of it; but these two Hebrews were preserved by God. They gained the summit, and in a very short space of time they had slain twenty of their enemies. General consternation spread through the camp of the Philistines. That great army, numerous as the sand on the sea shore, trembled, though the warriors who opposed them only numbered two. They trembled because the Lord sent fear into their hearts. The success which attended Jonathan in this enterprise teaches us, that if we acknowledge God in all our ways He will direct our steps.

George. But what did the Philistines do, grandfather?

Jonathan and his armour-bearer could not kill many of them.

Grandfather. They killed each other, for the terror that had taken possession of them made them unable to distinguish friends from foes. The watchmen of Saul's little army looked out upon their enemies, and saw, to their surprise, that great multitude melting away and beating down one another. Saul and his people were emboldened by this sight. They went forth to the battle, and all the Israelites who had hid themselves ventured now to shew their faces in broad daylight, and marched against the fleeing foe. Other Israelites were there before them—those who had deserted their country's interests in the time of its greatest danger, and who had joined themselves to the camp of the enemy —even they turned their hands against the Philistines now when they saw them already smitten. Whichever side they might fight on they could bring little honour to it. The king was very desirous that now when his subjects had begun to fight, they should continue all that day to pursue their enemies, and allow nothing to interrupt them. That this point might be gained, he said, "Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies."

Marianne. Was it right of Saul to wish a curse upon the people, grandfather?

Grandfather. It was not right; we ought to bless, and curse not. It was cruel in Saul to lay such a command upon the people, for it weakened them, and made them unable to pursue their enemies.

George. But it would have wasted a great deal of time if they had gone straggling about seeking for food.

Grandfather. Well, he might have forbidden them to wander in search of it, but to forbid men who had hard work before them, and who were faint with hunger, to forbid them to eat the food that lay at their hands, was too much. The command was very unwise, but the threat that was joined to it was positively sinful.

Johnnie. If I had been there I would not have cared for the king. I would have taken something to eat.

Grandfather. Ah, but that would have been very wrong. We are bound to obey those who have authority over us, whether they be good people or not. It is not only to the good and gentle rulers that we are commanded to submit, but also to the froward.

Marianne. Did all the people obey the order Saul gave?

Grandfather. All except Jonathan, who was not present when the command was given. In the pursuit the Israelites went through a wood. There was such a quantity of wild honey in the trees that it was dropping upon the ground, yet none of the people touched it, to their honour be it spoken. Jonathan only, in his father's army, was ignorant of his father's command, so he took a little honey, by which he was greatly refreshed. Then some of the people about him told him how the case stood, which it greatly grieved him to hear. The people, from faintness, were unable to pursue their ene-

mies so far as they might have done, and at evening they fell so eagerly upon their food that they devoured meat half raw, and did not even wait till the cattle were properly killed. Saul thought of continuing the pursuit that night. His people made no objection. The high priest who was with him said that they ought to ask advice from God. To this Saul agreed. They asked, but their prayers were not answered. This shewed the king that some of the people had disobeyed him, and he resolved to discover the offender, that he might put him to death. Some of the people knew what Jonathan had done, but none of them would tell of it. The only plan to find out the offender was to cast lots, which Saul did, and Jonathan was taken. His father asked what he had done. He frankly confessed that he had taken a little honey, and gave himself up to die without urging anything in his own defence—neither his ignorance of his father's command, nor the great obligations the people were under to him.

Johnnie. But Saul would not kill Jonathan, seeing he did not know of the command?

Grandfather. Saul passed sentence upon his son very speedily. He wished that God would do so to himself, and more, if Jonathan did not die. Yet Jonathan did not die. The people rose up in his defence,—"Shall Jonathan die," they exclaimed, "who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel?" They had submitted to their king in everything else, however contrary to their own natural inclinations, but they could not sub-

mit to see their prince unjustly put to death. Saul could not have been otherwise than well pleased that the life of his son was saved by the people, though he would not do it of his own accord. From Saul's conduct on this occasion we are warned to avoid rashness, for by it he had very nearly sacrificed one of the most valuable lives in the country. From Jonathan's conduct we are taught to seek for that composure of spirit which can bear injustice with meekness. From the conduct of the people we learn that we ought actively to take part with the oppressed.

George. Did Saul fight many more battles?

Grandfather. Yes, he fought against all his enemies round about, and with the Philistines he was at war all his days; but of many of his battles we have no account. But there is one of which I must tell you something. The Lord commanded him to march against the Amalekites, and cut them all off, as a punishment for what they had done to the Israelites when they were in the wilderness. Saul went against them with a large army, and God gave them into his hand, but he did not entirely destroy them, for he spared the life of the king, and he did not kill the best of the cattle and sheep. Probably covetousness was his inducement in both cases. He tried to make a plausible excuse for his conduct to Samuel, telling him that he had kept the animals to offer as sacrifices to the Lord. But Samuel told him that the Lord was greatly displeased—that no sacrifice could be acceptable in his sight unless it were accom-

panied by obedience. "To obey," said the prophet, "is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." These words of Samuel teach us that all the profession we may make is of no avail, unless we make it our constant endeavour to do the will of God. Saul is a striking example of the evil of disobedience. After this affair in regard to the children of Amalek, he had to hear his doom repeated to him by Samuel, who told him that because he had rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord had rejected him from being king, and had given the kingdom to a neighbour of his, who was better than he. Then the prophet Samuel, though a man of peace, took the sword of justice in his hand, and executed the commands of God in putting to death Agag, king of the Amalekites.

We must conclude now; we have talked long to-night.

The Israelites erred in thinking themselves secure of victory if the ark were with them,—Who resemble them in this?

In what ought we to follow the example of the men of Bethshemesh?

What does their fate teach us to avoid?

The Spirit of the Lord taught Saul to command; the fear of the Lord taught the people to obey,—What do we learn from this?

The Lord gave victory to the arms of Israel, which caused Saul to refuse to put to death those who had scorned him,—What does this teach us?

Saul, for his disobedience, lost the kingdom,—What are we taught by this?

What do we learn from the success which attended Jonathan in his attack of the Philistines' garrison?

What do we learn from Saul's conduct in the pursuit that day?

What are we taught by Jonathan's conduct, when he was unjustly condemned?

What are we taught by the people's conduct on the same occasion?

"To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams,"—What do these words teach us?

THE FATHER OF A RACE OF KINGS.

" God is the eternal King; thy foes in vain
Raise their rebellions to confound thy reign;
In vain the storms, in vain the floods arise,
And roar, and toss their waves against the skies;
Foaming at heaven, they rage with wild commotion,
For heaven's high arches scorn the swelling ocean.

" Ye tempests, rage no more; ye floods, be still,
And the mad world submissive to his will;
Built on His truth, His church must ever stand;
Firm are His promises, and strong His hand;
See His own sons, when they appear before Him,
Bow at His footstool, and with fear adore Him."

WATTS.

Marianne. Grandfather, I do not like Samuel very well. He seems as if he were glad to tell Saul that he was to lose the kingdom. It looks as if he did not like poor Saul.

Grandfather. If my way of telling the story gives you that impression, the fault is mine, for it is very different from the account that the Bible gives. We read there how Samuel mourned for Saul—how he even cried all night to the Lord for him. From his example we learn what we ought to do in regard to those who have

rejected the commandments of the Lord. We have arrived now at the time when Saul's successor was introduced into the army. The Philistines assembled their armies, marched into the territories of Judah, and there pitched their camp. The Israelites gathered together and pitched near them. Each army was on a mountain, a valley lay between them. In the Philistine host there was a giant, whose name was Goliath. He belonged to the town of Gath. He was of the sons of Anak, hearing of whom from the spies had so filled the children of Israel with dread.

Johnnie. How tall was the giant, grandfather?

Grandfather. Six cubits and a span. Some make the cubit to be twenty-one inches; but even reckoning it at a foot and a half, the height of Goliath would be within three inches of ten feet. He was completely armed. He wore a coat of mail and a brass helmet. He stepped forth from the ranks of his countrymen and called out to the Israelites, offering to decide the battle by single combat, if any man of Israel would come forward to encounter him. "If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me," said the tall Philistine, "then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us." These words, and the formidable appearance of the speaker, struck terror into the hearts of Saul and his men. None dared to reply. Forty days the Philistine approached every morning and every evening, and defied his trembling foes. In the town of Bethlehem,

of the tribe of Judah, there lived at this time a very old man, named Jesse. He had eight sons, the three eldest of whom were in the army of Saul. One day Jesse called to him his youngest son, David, and told him to go to the camp to see how his brethren were, and carry some provisions—some bread and corn to them, and some cheeses to their captain. Early the next morning David rose. He gave the sheep he was in the habit of tending into the care of a keeper. He took the provisions of which his father had spoken, went to the camp, and arrived there as the armies were preparing to engage. David left his baggage behind him, and ran eagerly forward to salute his brethren. While he was talking with them, forward came the champion Goliath, and spoke the same words he had been in the habit of saying. David heard, and so did all the soldiers of Israel, who, although they might have been accustomed by this time to the sight of the formidable Philistine, yet could not see him without turning to flee. They told David that whoever of the men of Israel killed the giant, the king had promised to endow him with great riches, to give him his daughter to wife, and to bestow great privileges on his father's house. Indignantly the son of Jesse exclaimed, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" Angrily spoke his eldest brother Eliab to the young shepherd. "Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left these few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and

the naughtiness of thy heart: for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle." Eliab spoke unreasonably, because envy had got the better of him. He was angry that a brother who was so much younger than he, a youth who knew nothing of the practice of war, should speak so boldly against the Philistine who sent terror through all the camp; and he was angry that the brother on whom he had been accustomed to look down met with consideration and respect from the soldiers. Suffer not envy to enter your hearts my children. It is a most sinful passion. We ought to find real pleasure in the advancement and prosperity of others. Although Eliab in one breath accused his brother, and accused him unjustly, of idleness, pride, and silly curiosity, David's reply was gentle. He asked what evil he had done, and if there was not a cause for his being there. When the words of David came to the ears of Saul, he sent for him. "Let no man's heart fail because of him," said the young shepherd; "thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." The king thought him unfitted for such an office, from his youth and inexperience in war; but David told him he had had encounters as formidable as that with this Philistine giant. Twice, when he was feeding his father's flock, they had been attacked by wild animals—once by a lion, and once by a bear. Both of these fierce animals David had killed; and the champion of Gath, he said, would be as one of them, because he had defied the armies of the living God. Confidently did Jesse's

youngest son speak of the protection of the God in whom he trusted. "The Lord," he said, "that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." A confidence so firmly founded no one could attempt to shake. "Go," said Saul, "and the Lord be with thee."

Johnnie. Had David a sword when he went to fight against the giant?

Grandfather. He had not; Saul gave him a suit of armour to wear, but he merely tried it on and took it off again, because, not having been accustomed to it, he could not act easily in it. He took a staff in his hand, and a sling, and chose five smooth stones to put in a shepherd's bag which he carried. It was told to Goliath that his challenge was accepted, and forward he went to meet the champion of Israel. He looked about to see the warrior who was daring enough to encounter him. No one could he see but a fair young lad, dressed in peasant's garb, with a staff in his hand. "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?" the son of Anak haughtily exclaimed. Then he called on his opponent to come forward, and he would speedily make an end of him. Firm and full of faith was David's reply, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." He expressed himself as certain that the Lord would that day deliver Goliath into

his hand; and that not Goliath alone was that day to meet his doom, but the hosts of the Philistines were to be delivered into the power of their enemies. David was convinced that such would be the result of the encounter, "that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel."

Johnnie. How did the battle get on then, grandfather?

Grandfather. The Philistine came forward with pompous stride. David eagerly ran to meet him; he raised his sling, in which he had put a stone, and slang it with aim so exact that it sank into the forehead of the Philistine, and he fell to rise no more. Then David took the sword of his opponent from its sheath and cut off his head.

George. It must have been an interesting sight that to see, but particularly to those who did see it, when so much depended on it to them. What did the Philistines do when they saw their champion fall?

Grandfather. They fled, closely pursued by the men of Israel and Judah, who routed them with a great slaughter. That day began the friendship between Jonathan and David, a friendship which lasted while they lived, and doubtless lasts still; and a friendship which, for strength and force of attachment, has rarely been equalled, never exceeded.

George. Did they fight any battles together?

Grandfather. They did not, and were very little together, for Saul took such a great ill-will to David

that he was obliged to absent himself from his presence.

Marianne. Why did the king take an ill-will to him when he had done such a great action?

Grandfather. When the army was returning from the defeat of the Philistines, the women from all the cities of Israel came out to meet the king, singing, dancing, and playing on musical instruments. They sang, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." From that day forward we are told that Saul "eyed David." He looked on him with hatred and suspicion—hatred so furious that he even sought to take his life. Twice David saved his life by hastily departing from the presence of his jealous sovereign. Disappointed in his villanous attempt, Saul thought to make Israel's brave defender fall by a Philistine hand, so he caused his servants to tell the young Bethlehemite that he would give him his daughter Michal to be his wife if he first slayed two hundred Philistines. David cheerfully undertook this task, and succeeded in it; but though Saul gave him his daughter as he had promised, yet he hated him more and more.

Marianne. Could Jonathan not do something to make David's situation more comfortable?

Grandfather. Jonathan did all he could. He warned David of coming danger, and he used all his influence with his father to persuade him to be on friendly terms with so brave and faithful a servant. The king followed the advice of his excellent son, and for a short time there

was an appearance of peace in the court. But war came again, and when David returned from an encounter with the Philistines, loaded with fresh honour, Saul's evil spirit of envy rose higher and stronger than ever. That night he was indebted to his wife Michal for saving his life by letting him down the wall of his house through a window.

Marianne. Saul had turned a dreadfully wicked man.

George. Well, I do not wonder very much at the dislike he took to David, if he knew that he was to succeed him.

Marianne. But that was no excuse for his wishing to kill him.

George. He might think perhaps, if he killed him, that that would secure the kingdom to himself and his family.

Grandfather. He may have been deluded by some idea of that kind, but he sought to kill David because he had suffered his evil passions to get entirely the better of him. David was a faithful subject, a fearless soldier, and a wise man, such a one as any king would have delighted to honour,—any king in his senses that is to say, but he ceases to be in his senses who is under the rule of his own wicked passions. May the misery of Saul warn us to avoid envy. Let us try to check the first rising of it, for the longer we yield to it the stronger it grows.

Johnnie. But we have no need to be envious, grandfather; we have not a kingdom like Saul, so nobody can take it away from us.

Grandfather. Ah, but we can be quite as envious about very little things, and the smaller our temptations are, the greater is the sin of yielding to them. If Saul is a warning to us, Jonathan gives us a noble example of how we ought to love one another. According to human ideas it would not seem natural that the son of Saul could feel kindly towards one who he knew was to wear the crown to which he stood heir. But Jonathan's was a more lofty spirit; he was above all petty jealousy.

Marianne. I think Jonathan was one of the best people I ever heard of.

Grandfather. He certainly was a very faultless character; there is nothing told of him that is not to his praise. His father, enraged at his steady friendship to David, tried to put David to death.

George. Did David fight any more battles while Saul was on the throne?

Grandfather. Yes, when he was in the forest of Hareth, in the land belonging to Judah, it was told him that the Philistines had gone up against Keilah, and were robbing the thrashing floors. David inquired of the Lord if he should go and smite the Philistines. The Lord told him to go. But David's men objected. They thought that they encountered dangers enough as they were, without increasing them by going against the Philistines.

George. How many men had he?

Grandfather. About four hundred had collected round him. When they refused to accompany him to Keilah, he inquired of the Lord again. The reply of his God

was, "Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand." This promise was enough. His men could object no more. They accompanied David to Keilah, fought with the Philistines, and conquered. Saul heard that David was at Keilah, and doubtless heard too what had brought him there; but instead of thinking how he could honour the man who had avenged his country's wrongs, the jealous sovereign thought only of putting to death the man who was exceeded by none of his subjects in greatness and in goodness. It was an excellent opportunity, the king thought, to seize his enemy, when he was in a walled town; so he assembled an army and went to besiege Keilah. When David heard of Saul's intentions, he besought direction from God. "Will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard?" "He will come down," was the reply of the Lord. Then David asked, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?" The reply of the Lord was, "They will deliver thee up."

Marianne. What wicked people they must have been, when he had fought for them so bravely, to think of giving him up to the king who wished to kill him.

Grandfather. We learn from David's conduct in regard to them to "cease from man," and to put our trust entirely in God.

George. Did they give him up?

Grandfather. They had it not in their power, for he and his men, now about six hundred in number, left Keilah, and when Saul heard that David had escaped,

he did not go to the town. The history of David is very interesting, and much may be learned from it; but we must study it at another time. We are merely going over the battles, and cannot enter into the details of his dangers and escapes.

Johnnie. You might tell us about one or two of them though, grandfather, just now.

Grandfather. Well, I may say a little about them. After David left Keilah he staid in a wood in the wilderness of Ziph. The Ziphites informed Saul of this, who greatly praised their conduct, and followed them with his men. David tried to flee, but that was not easy. The king's army closely pursued him. When he was on the one side of a mountain, they were on the other, and were beginning to put in execution a plan for surrounding his little band. At this critical moment a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Haste thee, and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land." This caused Saul to abandon the pursuit. We are told nothing of his encounter with the Philistines. It appears to be recorded only to show the way by which David escaped. The Philistines intended no good to him in invading the land, and yet he was the better for it. This teaches us that if we put our trust in God, he can make even those who hate us labour for our good. When Saul returned from his engagement with the Philistines, he again pursued David, who, with his men, hid in a cave among the rocks. Into the same cave Saul went, lay down, and fell asleep. The men of David urged him to kill his enemy. Here

was a good opportunity. An end would be put to the strife which troubled the land, and the homeless fugitive would be seated on the throne. It was a great temptation, yet David did not yield to it. He did not touch the king himself, but only cut off a part of the skirt of his robe.

Johnnie. But, grandfather, why did he not kill Saul? I am sure he deserved it from David, for he was always trying to kill him.

Grandfather. He tells us the reason himself in these words: "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed; to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord." As Saul was walking out of the cave, unconscious of the danger he had been exposed to, he heard a voice behind him saying, "My Lord the King." He turned, and saw David bowing with his face to the ground. He listened to David pleading in his own defence, that though his life was sought for by his sovereign, yet when that sovereign's life was in his power, he did not take it. Saul heard, and when the son of Jesse ceased to speak, "Is this thy voice, my son David?" the Benjamite king said, and wept. The hard-hearted pursuer of David was softened, and he spoke earnestly in praise of one whom lately he had been seeking to slay. He said he knew that David would be king, and asked him to promise not to cut off his descendants. The promise was given. Saul retired, and David remained, thinking himself safer in the wilderness than at the court of Saul.

Marianne. But surely he need not have been afraid after Saul had repented of his conduct to him.

Grandfather. The repentance of Saul was not heart-felt, so it did not deserve the name of repentance. It was merely a feeling of sorrow and shame for the wrong he had done. He did not turn from the evil of his way. Not long after, the jealous king, accompanied by three thousand chosen men of Israel, went to the wilderness with the intention of taking the life of his successor. David hearing of this, went to take a look at the camp of his determined foe. As he looked down on Saul and his army, he asked two of his chief men if either of them would go with him to the camp. Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, volunteered. So the two went down together. Not a sentinel was at his post. The king slept soundly, and Abner, his captain, along with all the soldiers, lay sleeping round. In the stillness of the camp the voice of Abishai was heard, and these were the words he said: "God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day. Now, therefore, let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear, even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time." Again David was tempted, and again he was strengthened to resist the temptation.

Johnnie. But he might have allowed Abishai to kill him if he did not like to do it himself.

Grandfather. The sin would have been the same on David's part, even though the deed were not done by his own hand. "Destroy him not," he said to Abishai,

" for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?"

George. And did they not do anything to Saul?

Grandfather. They took the spear and cruise of water that were beside Saul's pillow, and left the hostile camp in silence and in safety, for a deep sleep had fallen upon Saul and his three thousand men. A hill at some distance David ascended, and, standing on the top, he called out to Abner, Saul's captain, reproaching him for permitting danger to come so near his sovereign. Saul recognised the voice of David, and he called out to him, confessing that he himself had played the fool, and promising that if David would return he would no more seek to do him hurt.

Marianne. Did David return then?

Grandfather. He did not trust himself at the court of Saul, and so far his conduct was prudent and right, but when he went the length of leaving his country for fear of Saul we must condemn him. He went to the country of the Philistines, and the difficulties he encountered there shew us that we are always safest and happiest in the path of duty.

Johnnie. But what harm was there in David's going among the Philistines when Saul was trying to get him killed?

Grandfather. It shewed want of faith. The God who had protected him before was as able to protect him still. It was at the court of Achish, king of Gath, that David took refuge. Achish was very kind to him, and gave

him the town of Ziklag to live in. There David and his men, with their wives and children, lived for a year and four months.

Marianne. What happened to David in Ziklag?

Grandfather. He collected his men and went against the Amalekites, and some other people, inhabitants of the land. He dsetroyed the whole of them, and took away their cattle and all their moveable possessions. When he returned to his abode in Gath, Achish asked him where he had been fighting. David said what was not true; for he told the king he had been fighting against his own brethren.

Johnnie. Why did he say that?

Grandfather. Because he knew it would please the king; but it was very wicked in David, and cannot be excused. He was brave enough to face his enemies in the field, but was too cowardly to tell the truth to Achish. David suffered for this. There was war between the Philistines and the Israelites. Achish called on David to join him. In obedience to this command he and his men accompanied the king of Gath to the place of meeting, at Aphek. The lords of the Philistines were there. When they saw the son of Jesse and his men, they said, "What do these Hebrews here?" Achish explained that this was David, the servant of Saul, who had been with him for so long, and that all the time he had been with him he had seen no cause for finding fault with anything he had done. "Make this fellow return," said the lords of the Philistines, for they feared

that he would act a traitor's part. Achish spoke to David, and greatly praised his conduct, but told him that the will of the princes of the Philistines must be obeyed. Let us follow the example of Achish in giving praise to those who we think deserve it. It was the goodness of Divine Providence that moved these lords of the Philistines to object to David, that he might escape from the false position in which he was placed, being ranged in the ranks of his country's foes.

Marianne. David must have been very glad when he got away from the Philistines' army.

Grandfather. Doubtless he was glad, and thankful to the Lord, who had delivered him from so great a difficulty. But a sad sight met his eyes when he reached his home at Ziklag: No Ziklag was there; it was burnt with fire, and the wives and children of David and his men were gone. The Amalekites had carried them away captive. David's followers were in grief, so violent that they spoke of stoning their leader; but he was not afraid of them, for he "encouraged himself in the Lord his God." He had repented of those things in which he had offended, and now God was gracious to him, for he sent him support in time of trouble. After inquiring of the Lord, and receiving a favourable answer, David and his six hundred men set off in pursuit of the Amalekites. When they reached the brook Besor, they were obliged to leave two hundred of them behind; from exhaustion they were unable to cross the brook, but David and

four hundred went on. In a field they found a young Egyptian dying for want of food. They treated him kindly, and gave him food and drink, which revived him. He had tasted neither bread nor water for three days and three nights. David asked him who he was, and from whence he had come. He said that he was servant to an Amalekite, and had been with his master at the burning of Ziklag three days before David found him. He had fallen sick, and his master left him in the field to die. David then asked if he would guide him to the Amalekite company. The young man of Egypt agreed to do this if safety and protection were promised him. Guided by the Egyptian, David and his men fell upon the Amalekites when they were eating, drinking, and enjoying themselves. The small band of Israelites cut them all off, and regained the whole of their wives, their children, and their cattle. Of the Amalekites there escaped only four hundred, who mounted on camels and fled.

George. Did a battle take place between the Israelites and the Philistines after the princes sent David away from the army?

Grandfather. A battle did take place, and it was a very important battle; but we must defer the account of it till another evening.

Samuel mourned and prayed for Saul,—What do we learn from his example?

In what ought we to find real pleasure?

What does the misery of Saul warn us against?

Of what does Jonathan give us a noble example?

What do we learn from David's conduct in regard to the men of Keilah?

By invading Israel's territory, the Philistines did not intend to favour David, and yet they did so,—What does this teach us?

In what ought we to follow the example of Achish?

THE SON OF JESSE ON THE THRONE.

" How blest the sacred tie that binds,
In union sweet, according minds;—
How swift the heavenly course they run,
Whose heart, whose faith, whose hopes are one.

" Nor shall the glowing flame expire,
When nature drops her sick'ning fire;—
Then shall they meet in realms above,
A heaven of joy, because of love."

MRS BARBAULD.

Grandfather. On Mount Gilboa armies were ranged for battle; the hosts of the Philistines and of the Israelites fought there. It went hard with the sons of Jacob;—many fell, and many fled. Three of the princes, sons of the king, were slain, and Saul himself was sorely wounded. Afraid of the insults of his enemies, the wounded king requested of his armour-bearer to put an end to his miserable existence. His follower feared to do this; so the king took a sword and cast himself upon it. Thus he died, poor miserable man! The wretched end of this weak and jealous sovereign teaches us to pray that we may not die the death of the wicked. His whole care in dying was for his body.

The mortal part seemed to his earthly mind of more importance than his immortal soul.

George. But he would have been killed at any rate, grandfather, and the Philistines might have made him die a very disgraceful death.

Grandfather. It is not in the power of any one to disgrace us; whatever they may do, no real disgrace can attach to us unless we bring it upon ourselves. At the hands of the Philistines Saul might have met with torture and abuse;—he might have suffered a death of lingering pain, but in all that there would have been no dishonour. He dishonoured himself by his cowardice.

George. Cowardice, grandfather! It seems to me a brave thing for a man to kill himself when he knows that he must die soon at any rate.

Grandfather. You know, my boy, that he is a cowardly man who is afraid of anything which cannot do him real harm. It is fear of man which causes self-murder,—and fear of man is cowardice; for what does our blessed Saviour say?—"Fear not them which, after they have destroyed the body, have no more that they can do; but fear him who is able to cast both soul and body into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." The fear of God will make a man brave: the fear of man will make him a coward. The taking away of one's own life is caused by the latter fear entirely overpowering the former. It is committed by those who, aware that they cannot face death calmly, choose to rush upon it madly. This, George, is cowardice. Saul's last rash

act was the cause of sin in another: his armour-bearer, when he saw him fall, followed his example. But the poor king did not save his body from being abused. The Philistines cut off his head, and fastened his body, and the bodies of his three sons, on the walls of Bethshan. Terror came on the men of Israel after this disastrous battle; they forsook the cities in the neighbourhood, and the Philistines took possession of them. But there were brave hearts in Israel yet. When the men of Jabesh-Gilead heard how the remains of their sovereign and his sons had been treated, they travelled all night, crossed the Jordan by its fords, and took down the bodies from the walls of Bethshan. They carried them to Jabesh-Gilead, where they treated them with all respect,—burning and burying them according to custom. They made a mourning for them, and a seven days' fast.

Johnnie. The people surely could not do without food for seven days, grandfather?

Grandfather. Fasting for seven days means that they tasted no food until sunset. Such was their practice in times of mourning.

Marianne. You did not tell us, grandfather, the names of Saul's three sons who fell in battle?

Grandfather. Their names were Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua.

Marianne. Then Jonathan was among them. I am sorry for that. I thought that he had not been killed so soon.

George. It would not have done for him to have lived longer, now that the kingdom was David's, although Jonathan was heir-at-law.

Marianne. But Jonathan did not care for the kingdom; he liked David better; he would not have thought of opposing him.

Grandfather. Certainly he would not, yet the people might. As it was, years passed before the great body of the Israelites submittted to David. They adhered to a son of Saul, who appears to have had nothing to recommend him save his connection with royalty. Had Jonathan lived he would have had a difficult part to act, to satisfy a people to whom he was deservedly so dear, and yet make no attempt to gain the throne on which they wished him to sit.

Johnnie. Where was David now?

Grandfather. At the time of the battle he was in Ziklag. On the third day after, a man came with torn clothes, and earth upon his head; he bowed to the ground before David. "From whence comest thou?" the son of Jesse asked. "Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped," was the reply. "How went the matter?" was the question that naturally followed. The man's answer was, "The people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also." "How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?" David demanded. The young man's answer was to this effect, that he happened to come near when the sovereign was

in great distress, afraid to live, and unable to end his life. He called on this young man, the Amalekite who was telling this, and asked him to kill him. The son of Amalek obeyed, and took from him his crown and bracelet. In proof of this he produced these, and offered them to David.

Marianne. But that story was not true, grandfather, for Saul killed himself.

Grandfather. It is possible that the story may have been true, for Saul's strength may have failed him when he tried to take away his own life, and he may have got the Amalekite to do the deed which baffled him. At all events, David had no reason for doubting the truth of it. In great displeasure he said to the young man, "How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" Then he ordered one of his followers to put him to death, which was done. "Thy blood be upon thy head," were the last words of David to the Amalekite, "for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed." The son of Jesse then made a lamentation for his greatest enemy, and for his greatest earthly friend, teaching us, by the way in which he speaks of the former, that we ought to forgive and forget the injuries we have received. The successor of Saul also shewed his loyalty by sending messengers to Jabesh-Gilead, to tell the men of that place how highly he approved of what they had done, in the respect shewn by them to the memory of the late king.

George. Had the Israelites acknowledged David for their king now?

Grandfather. Only the men of Judah had done so. He lived at Hebron, and reigned over the tribe to which he himself belonged. Abner, the uncle of Saul, took Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, and made him king over all the other tribes of Israel. Abner was not satisfied with this. He marched against David, to take the tribe of Judah from him. Joab, the son of Zeruiah, led David's men out to meet Abner. The opposing armies were stationed one on each side of the pool of Gibeon. Abner proposed that twelve of each side should meet and engage in combat. He calls it play,—a barbarous play it was. All the four and twenty fell down dead together; each thrust his sword into his fellow's side. This sight roused the men of both sides to avenge the death of their champions; the battle raged keenly, and the adherents of Ishbosheth were defeated, and fled. Asahel, the brother of Joab, was famous for his swiftness in running. We are told that he was as "light of foot as a wild roe." He determined to overtake Abner, and trusted to his own speed for success. When the captain of the Israelites saw Asahel gaining upon him, he advised him to turn aside to follow some one else, telling him that he did not wish to kill him, for he was Joab's brother, but he would be obliged to do it if the youth would not leave off following him. Asahel would not hear; he ran on, and ran upon his death, for Abner smote him with the hinder

end of his spear, and immediately the swift runner fell, to run no more.

Johnnie. That was cruel in Abner.

Grandfather. We can impute no blame to Abner in this. He acted honestly—even kindly—and only slew an enemy to save his own life.

George. Did any other of David's men overtake Abner?

Grandfather. Yes, Joab, with the body of the army, overtook Abner and his people about sunset. On the top of a hill Abner stood and called out to Joab, "Shall the sword devour for ever? Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? How long shall it be then ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?" In the early part of the day fighting had appeared sport to Abner; now, when the battle had gone against him, he could see and speak with truth of the evils of war. This teaches us to avoid contention, for those who are most eager for its commencement may be the first to wish it had never been begun.

Marianne. What answer did Joab make to Abner?

Grandfather. Joab at once agreed that there should be peace, telling Abner that if he had not proposed a battle, one would not have been fought. Though a conqueror, he sought not to pursue his victory, but blew a trumpet, and the people turned from following Abner and his troops. This conduct of Joab teaches us to shew mercy to those who are in any degree in our power, and always to love peace.

George. Were there any more battles fought between Joab and Abner?

Grandfather. There is no particular account given us of another battle, yet we are told that war continued long between the house of Saul and the house of David; and that while the son of Jesse was growing stronger and stronger, his adversaries were growing weaker and weaker. A quarrel between Ishbosheth and Abner brought matters to a point. Abner made a league with David, and exerted himself to bring over to his side all the subjects of Ishbosheth. When he had communicated with the chiefs of the people, and got some of them to enter into his views, he went to Hebron to confer with David on the subject. David received him kindly, and they parted good friends. Soon after Abner left, Joab and the army returned from pursuing an enemy over whom they had been victorious. When Joab was told of the treaty with Abner, he spoke very angrily of it to David, and privately sent off messengers to bring Abner back. Unsuspectingly, the son of Ner returned to meet his doom. In the gate of Hebron Joab took him aside, and gave him his death blow there.

Marianne. Why did Joab do such a wicked thing, grandfather?

Grandfather. The reason given is, because his brother Asahel was slain by Abner. But that was no excuse; Asahel was slain in fair fight, but Abner fell by secret treachery. It is not improbable that jealousy of Abner prompted Joab to do the vile deed he did. He dreaded

lest Abner might be his rival in the counsels or in the armies of David. But Abner's death came not undeservedly. He had been a man of blood, and had caused the shortening of many lives. David grieved much for the death of Abner, and paid all the respect to his memory that he could, burying him with due honour, and following him to the grave as his chief mourner. The death of Abner was felt as a great loss by the feeble minded son of Saul, who, however, did not long survive his protector. Two of his captains slew him in bed, cut off his head, and carried it to Hebron where David was. They expected a reward from him, but he justly sentenced them to die. The head of Ishbosheth was buried in the burying place of Abner.

George. The death of Ishbosheth would end the war?

Grandfather. It did. All the tribes of Israel went to Hebron to ask David to be their king. From that time forward, David ruled over all Israel and Judah. He had reigned in Hebron seven years and a half over the tribe of Judah alone. He reigned in Jerusalem thirty-three years over the twelve tribes.

Johnnie. Then there would be no more war in his reign after he was made king over all the country.

Grandfather. The Israelites all owned him as their sovereign, yet he was not free from war. From the commencement to the close of his career was one continued scene of strife. First, there was Jerusalem to subdue, which was in the hands of the Jebusites. When David with an army went against the place, the inhabitants

mocked, thinking David could not conquer them who had been so long unsubdued. They called out to him, "Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither." The blind and the lame are supposed to mean their gods, in whom they trusted, who had eyes but saw not, and feet but could not walk. There could be little doubt who would conquer when one side put their confidence in images, the other trusted in the Lord God of Hosts. David took the place, and fixed his residence there. When the Philistines heard that David was king in Jerusalem, they assembled and went against him, spreading their hosts over the valley of Rephaim. Now David had thirty captains, all men of wonderful might and bravery. The feats they performed were astonishing. Two of them, each alone, and with his spear, had slain three hundred men at one time. Another had slain an Egyptian giant; another slew two lion-like men of Moab, besides a real lion in a pit, and on a snowy day, too, when hunger makes the monarch of the woods more fierce. While the army of the Philistines was ranged against him, David took a great desire for drink from a certain well beside the gate of Bethlehem. The Philistines' garrison was there, so that to express this desire seemed foolish; yet David did express it, and three of his brave captains, eager to please him, hastened towards Bethlehem, broke the army of their enemies, procured the water, and brought it to their king. When he saw what they had done, he repented of the rash speech,

which had endangered their valuable lives. He could not bear to drink the water procured with so much risk, but poured it out as a drink-offering before the Lord. From David's conduct in this case we see how wrong it is to place others in difficulty merely to please our taste; and from his example we learn that when we are aware we have done or said anything wrong, we ought not to be ashamed to confess it.

George. Was there a battle at that time between David and the Philistines?

Grandfather. There was. David after having inquired of the Lord, and receiving a favourable answer, marched against the Philistines. He obtained a complete victory over them, for which he gave to God the glory, saying, "The Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters." For this reason he called the place where the battle was fought Baalperazim, which means the master of breaches. David took the images of the conquered army and burnt them. Their worshippers had taken them to the fight, thinking in their blindness that these blocks could protect them, forgetting that they could not protect themselves.

The Philistines were not yet subdued. A second time they encamped in the valley of Rephaim, ranged in battle array. David again inquired of the Lord, who directed him not to march straight against them, but to make a circuit, so as to come in behind them, near a mulberry wood. Neither was he to attack them when-

ever he reached the place; he must wait until he heard the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees,—that was to be the signal.

Johnnie. What is the meaning of a going in the tops of the trees?

Grandfather. It was a sound like the march of an army on the tops of the trees, and it was to be a signal to David that the Lord was there, and that the hosts of heaven were fighting for him. So assisted, David could not fail to obtain a complete victory over the Philistines.

We hear of many more of David's victories, but they are shortly told. He went out against the Philistines, and took possession of their capital, and the towns belonging to it. He smote the Moabites, and brought them under tribute. He then went against the Syrians of Zobah and defeated them, taking from them their chariots and laming their horses. The Syrians of Damascus went to assist their brethren, which gave David an opportunity of conquering them too, and bringing them under tribute. The king of Israel also put garrisons in Edom, and made the Edomites his tributaries. By the conquests of David, the Israelites were brought into full possession of all the territory which God had promised to the seed of Abraham, but which was possessed by only two of their kings, David and his son Solomon. Many gifts of very precious things were brought to David by the neighbouring princes, who respected him for his greatness and his power. These gifts he dedicated to the Lord; teaching us that we

ought to honour the Lord with our substance, and that the more there is given to us the more will be required of us.

The next war in which we hear of the Israelites being engaged was a war with the Ammonites and Syrians, and this was the reason of its being commenced: Nahash, the king of the children of Ammon, died, and Hanun, his son, succeeded him. David and Nahash had been friends and allies, so, out of respect to the memory of the father, David sent ambassadors to condole with the son, and to express his desire for the same friendly connection between the two countries. The irritable Ammonites did not take this embassy in good part; they looked on these ambassadors as spies, and treated them very shamefully. Then, afraid that the powerful king of Israel would revenge this insult to their ruin, they hired Syrian soldiers to protect them. They got one thousand from one place, twelve thousand from another, and twenty thousand from a third. It was necessary for the Israelites to bestir themselves, to prevent these foreign mercenaries from coming in to lay waste their lands. Joab led the army into the country of Ammon. There he found the enemy prepared to engage, so he lost no time in arranging his forces, and taking up his position. The Ammonites were ranged near the gate of their city; the Syrian kings, with their thirty-two thousand chariots, were at some distance off in the field. The army of Israel then must be divided to encounter two enemies at once. Joab chose for himself the most

difficult post and the bravest men; he was to fight with the Syrians, while the other part of the army, under the command of Abishai his brother, were ranged against the children of Ammon. When all were in order, Joab said to Abishai, "If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me; but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee. Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God. And the Lord do that which seemeth him good." This was not a long speech, but it was an excellent one. By it we are taught three things,—first, that we ought always to be willing to help each other in difficulties; second, that we should fear nothing when in the path of duty; and third, that we ought to rest satisfied with whatever it pleases God to appoint for us. A general who could preface a battle by such a speech deserved to win. And win he did, for no sooner had he drawn near to the Syrians to fight against them than those hired warriors turned and fled. When the children of Ammon saw the rout of the allies on whose support they trusted, they had no heart to fight, but turned and ran into their city.

Such was the end of the battle, but it was not the end of the war. The Syrian forces rallied again, and gathered themselves together in greater numbers than before. When David was told of this, he assembled an army, crossed the Jordan, and met the Syrians in a pitched battle. The Syrians were powerful in cavalry

and in chariots of war, yet Israel gained the victory, and forty thousand of Syria's horsemen, with seven thousand of her chariot-fighting warriors, were slain. The people of Syria were then glad to make their peace with David, and to become tributaries of his, for "they feared to help the children of Ammon any more." The loss they suffered warns us against giving assistance in a bad cause.

George. But what became of the Ammonites; did they submit without more ado?

Grandfather. No, they resisted for a time, but were obliged to yield after their chief city was taken by storm. David's cruelty to the children of Ammon is a great blot upon his character. He caused multitudes of them to be put to death in ways very painful and torturing.

We must now stop for to-night, though David's wars are not yet ended. The one most distressing to himself will be the next we have to consider.

What does the miserable end of Saul teach us?

What are we taught by the way in which David speaks of Saul after his death?

When the battle went against him, Abner could see the evils of war,—What does this teach us?

Though a conqueror, Joab willingly agreed to proposals for peace,—What does this teach us?

David acknowledged that he had done wrong in wishing for the water, when he found that his three

captains had risked their lives to procure it,—What are we taught by this?

What do we learn from Joab's speech to Abishai before the battle?

What are we taught by the defeats the Syrians sustained?

REBELLION AND SORROW.

" Oh, who would bear life's stormy doom,
Did not thy wing of love
Come brightly wafting through the gloom,
One peace-branch from above.

" The sorrow, touch'd by Thee, grows bright
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shews us worlds of light
We never saw by day."

MOORE.

Marianne. We have found out, grandfather, who fought against David in the most distressing of all his wars; it was his son Absalom. We read something about it, but we did not understand very well how the war began, and what made the people all take Absalom's part.

Grandfather. The people did not all take Absalom's part.

Marianne. But a great many of them did—surely almost all—when David was obliged to go away out of Jerusalem and wander in the wilderness.

George. Let grandfather begin at the beginning, and tell us all about it, that is best.

Grandfather. Absalom was the third son of David, but his two elder brothers being dead, he had the right of the first born, and naturally looked upon himself as heir to the throne. Presuming upon this, he exhibited a magnificence before unknown among the Israelites. He got horses and chariots, and fifty footmen to run before him, to warn the people that so great a man was approaching. He may have acquired this foolish love of display while he was living with his mother's father, the king of Geshur, where he had been for three years. Absurd as the display he made might be, it seemed to please the people; and he gained them still more by his extremely winning manner. He kissed and embraced all and sundry, and when any people came to present petitions to the king, he persuaded them that if he only were made judge they would get everything they wished. The people were deceived into fancying him one of the best of men; but his kindness was all outward show—it concealed a proud ambitious heart.

George. It was strange for a proud man to behave as he did.

Grandfather. It is no uncommon thing for a man who aims at power for himself to put on an appearance of condescension and humility. When Absalom thought himself secure of the people's affections, he proceeded to throw off the mask; and he went about that too in a very artful manner. He persuaded the king his father that he required to go to Hebron to perform a vow which he had made some years before.

David, of course, gave him permission to go. He next persuaded two hundred respectable citizens to accompany him,—men who certainly would not have gone had they had any idea what his real design in this journey was. They believed, as he told them, that it was undertaken for a religious purpose; but the religion of Absalom was only a cloak to cover his rebellious project.

Marianne. Did nobody except himself know what he meant to do?

Grandfather. Yes, he had spies stationed through all the tribes of Israel, to whom he gave orders that as soon as they heard the sound of the trumpet, they were to say, "Absalom reigneth in Hebron." Wherever that proclamation was made it increased the number of his adherents, and the party of the rebellious son became so strong that a messenger who brought the tidings to David, expressed it in these words,—"The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom." Immediately the king resolved to abandon his capital, and his servants declared that they were ready to do whatever pleased him.

George. It looked very cowardly to run away; why did David do it?

Grandfather. We are not told what his reasons were, but he may have had many, and weighty ones too. Before this he had sinned greatly;—the Lord was displeased, and sent a prophet to warn him that evil would rise up against him out of his own house. In

the conspiracy of Absalom the unhappy king would see the fulfilment of the prophecy; and he would think he must submit to the punishment which his sin had deserved. Then Absalom's party was such a numerous one, that the greater number of the inhabitants of Jerusalem might have been among them; and had David been sure of their fidelity, his love for that city might make him unwilling to have it exposed to a siege. Whatever his reasons were for leaving, there can be no doubt that he left with a sorrowful heart. Among those who accompanied him were six hundred men from Gath, a city of the Philistines. They had left their own country, had entered David's service, and had embraced the Jewish religion. The king of Israel was unwilling that these people should suffer with him. They were foreigners, bound to him by no tie but their own choice. So he told their leader, Ittai, that he ought to remain in the city and serve the new king. The reply of Ittai the Gittite was a very noble one,—"As the Lord liveth, and as my Lord the king liveth, surely in what place my Lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be." The example of this Philistine teaches us to consider only if the course we pursue be right, and being satisfied of that, to regard not the dangers and difficulties which may surround its followers. The priests next came with the ark, but at David's request they carried it back into the city. The priests he knew were faithful to him, but he did not think Absalom

would dare to do them any harm. Then did the king go wandering up the Mount of Olives barefooted like a slave, and his head covered like a mourner, and as he went he wept; and the people who were with him covered their heads and wept too.

George. It was very silly for so great a warrior as David to be crying like a child.

Johnnie. He could not help crying when he was obliged to leave his palace; he did not know if he might ever get back again, and he had no other house to go to.

Marianne. I think it was not that which made him cry, it was because his son that he liked so well was so wicked as to rebel against him.

Grandfather. Nor was that either the cause of David's weeping; it was sorrow for his sin that weighed upon him so heavily. His grief teaches us always to do right if we wish to be happy. The king of Israel was, however, a sincere penitent. He really hated his sin, and therefore God sent him comfort even in this time of trouble. The third psalm was written at this time, and it breathes a spirit of trust in God which cannot be exceeded. "I will not be afraid," he says, "of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about."

George. But was he not to do anything? was he just to run away and leave Absalom to take the kingdom?

Grandfather. He did something. When he heard that Ahithophel, a very wise man, was among the conspirators, he prayed that the Lord would turn Ahitho-

phel's counsel into foolishness. We learn from this to pray that God would defeat that counsel which is taken against his own people.

George. I think David might have tried a plan to make Ahithophel's advice useless.

Grandfather. He did try a plan. He sent his friend Hushai to profess submission to Absalom, but secretly to favour David by giving contrary advice to what Ahithophel gave, and send word to the exiled king what was determined on.

Marianne. That was not honest, grandfather. David ought not to have done it.

George. Why not? stratagems are common in war.

Grandfather. That they are common is true, George, but that does not make them right. David acted in this case as nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of a thousand would have acted, had they been in the same circumstances, and had the same idea occurred to them; yet I do not think that what he did was right. It was successful, however, as you shall hear. But first I must tell you who met the king on his journey. When he had got a little way past the top of the hill, there came up to him a man named Ziba, who was the servant of Mephibosheth.

Johnnie. Who was Mephibosheth? I do not recollect about him.

Grandfather. He was one of the sons of Saul, and he was lame. When David came to the throne, he had treated Mephibosheth very kindly. He gave him the

estate that had belonged to Saul his father, and entertained him at his own table as one of the royal family. Now Ziba, when he came to meet David on his weary journey, brought with him a couple of asses saddled, and loaded with two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred of summer fruits, and one bottle of wine. "What meanest thou by these?" the king said. Ziba replied, "The asses be for the king's household to ride upon, and the bread and the summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink." "Where is thy master's son?" asked the king. Ziba's answer was, "Behold he abideth at Jerusalem, for he said, 'To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.'"

Marianne. Oh, what a bad man! Did he really wish David to lose the kingdom when he had been so kind to him?

Grandfather. He did not. His servant was saying what was not true; but David believed him, for he said immediately, "Behold thine are all that pertained unto Mephibosheth."

Marianne. Then he gave away all Mephibosheth's estate; that was a pity,—he would be sorry when he found that what Ziba had said was not true.

Grandfather. Yes, he was; and we are shewn by his example the folly of passing an opinion before we have heard both sides. Soon after the encounter with Ziba, as the king still proceeded onwards, a man called Shimei, of

the tribe of Benjamin, appeared, who imprecated curses on the head of David, and threw stones at him and at his servants. Abishai, one of David's captains, asked leave to go and smite off Shimei's head; but David would not allow it. "My son," said the poor king, "seeketh my life, how much more now may this Benjamite do it?" He was so much humbled by his sorrow that he could not feel anger even at treatment so undeserved and so insulting as was that of Shimei.

George. You have not told us yet, grandfather, how Ahithophel got on, and the man that David sent back to contradict him. I do not recollect his name.

Grandfather. Hushai was his name. When Absalom expressed astonishment at seeing him among those who came to welcome him, he answered very cunningly, "Whom the Lord and his people and all the men of Israel choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide." This was a wise reply, according to the wisdom of this world, but it was not an honest answer.

George. And how did the two advisers get on?

Grandfather. Ahithophel advised an immediate pursuit of David. "Let me now choose out," he said, "twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night. And I will come upon him while he is weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid; and all the people that are with him shall flee, and I will smite the king only. And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace."

Marianne. He advised him to kill his father; surely Absalom would not follow that advice: it was very cruel.

Grandfather. Its cruelty was no obstacle to Absalom. The advice pleased him well. However, he resolved before deciding to consult Hushai; so he was called in Absalom related to him the advice which Ahithophel had given, and added, "Shall we do after his saying? if not, speak thou." "The counsel which Ahithophel hath given," said Hushai, "is not good at this time." He advised that they ought to take time, and not be too hasty in pursuing after David, because he himself was so great a warrior, and his men so valiant; and being at this time so much enraged against Absalom, doubtless they would fight very fiercely. Besides, he said that very likely a party of them were in ambush, who would rush out against Ahithophel and his twelve thousand men, who would be taken by surprise and defeated. His opinion was, that they ought to gather the whole army of the Israelites from one end of the country to the other. Then, by the force of numbers, there could be no doubt of their being able utterly to overpower David and his small army. "We will light upon him," said Hushai, "as the dew falleth on the ground; and of him, and of all the men that are with him, there shall not be left so much as one. Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there."

George. Well, that was very stupid advice; surely *Absalom* would not follow it.

Grandfather. Indeed he did; he and all the men of Israel were of one opinion. They said, "The counsel of Hushai, the Archite, is better than the counsel of Ahithophel."

George. They were very foolish. I cannot think why they did not at once see that Ahithophel's was by far the wisest advice.

Grandfather. Yes, George; but it pleased God to answer David's prayer by defeating the good counsel of Ahithophel. The wisdom of man can do much in leading his fellows; but the power of the Almighty can do far more. This teaches us that in all our efforts to guide others to what is good, we ought to look to the Lord for strength; for it is He only who can turn the hearts of men. Hushai had promised to send word to the king of what went on in the capital, so he went straight from Absalom to the priests Zadok and Abiathar. He told them what Ahithophel had advised, and what he had advised. He could not tell for certain what would be done. In case of the worst coming to pass, he told them to send a message to David that he must not stay in the wilderness, but cross the Jordan immediately, and seek some place of safety on the opposite side. The priests had two sons, called Jonathan and Ahimaaz, who were concealed outside Jerusalem, near a well called Enrogel. Zadok and Abiathar sent a maid servant to give to the two young men the information which Hushai had given to them.

Johnnie. Why did they need to hide themselves,

grandfather? They would not have been killed surely if they had gone into the town.

Grandfather. Perhaps not; but they might have been prevented carrying the message to David. They thought a woman going to the well was not likely to excite suspicion, and that they might get away from that place very quietly. Yet in spite of all their precautions they had been observed, and Absalom was told of it. Men were sent in pursuit; so the young priests saw it was necessary for them to hide. They went into a village called Bahurim, where a woman let them down into a well which was in her court. On the top of the well she spread a cloth, and on the cloth she spread ground corn. When the pursuers came asking for Jonathan and Ahimaaz, she told them that they had crossed the water.

Marianne. That was not true, grandfather. She ought not to have said it.

Grandfather. She ought not; a lie cannot be justified. The messengers of Absalom continued their search, but not finding those they sought, they returned to Jerusalem. So the sons of the priests got out of their hiding place, and continued their journey in safety. They delivered their message to David, and he acted upon it without delay. Before dawn next day he and his whole band had crossed the Jordan. They made their way to a city called Mahanaim, where they received great kindness. The chiefs of the children of Ammon, and of the Gileadites brought food to him and his men. An abundant supply of sheep, corn, butter, cheese, honey, and vege-

tables; and besides food they brought earthen vessels and beds. So the people got rest and refreshment, of which they had much need. In the meantime, Absalom assembled a great army, and passed over the Jordan. Amasa was the captain of his host.

George. What had become of Ahithophel?

Grandfather. He, poor man, came to a very unhappy end. When he saw that his advice was not followed, he saddled his ass, and journeyed from Jerusalem to his own city in Gihon. There, after arranging the affairs of his household, he deliberately put an end to his own life. This man, so much esteemed for his wisdom, committed the greatest of all follies—a folly which can never be remedied. From his miserable end we learn that the wisdom of the world is of little value, but that we ought to seek the true wisdom which cometh from above.

George. How did the armies get on? Did David go out to the battle himself?

Grandfather. He wished to do so, but his people would not allow him. "If we flee away," they said, "they will not care for us; neither if half of us die will they care for us; but now thou art worth ten thousand of us." So they persuaded David to remain. It was right that he should be willing to share the danger with his people; but it was also right that he should yield to their loyal and reasonable request. He divided his army into three parts: one part was led by Joab; another by Abishai, the brother of Joab; and the third by Ittai,

the Gittite. The king stood beside the gate of the city while the army was marching out; and in the hearing of all the people he gave to the three captains this command, "Deal gently, for my sake, with the young man, even with Absalom."

George. Was David's army large?

Grandfather. It could not have been large. We are not told in the Bible the exact number of it; but Josephus calls it four thousand.

Johnnie. Four thousand is a great deal of money.

George. It is not money, it is men that we are speaking about. You have been sleeping surely.

Johnnie. No, no,—I heard quite well. Tell on, grandfather, what did the four thousand do?

Grandfather. They fought in the wood of Ephraim against a very large army, and beat them. Twenty thousand were killed, many of them by the sword, but a greater number by the pits and bogs, and wild beasts of the wood. Absalom got upon his mule to fly, but as he was passing under a large oak tree, the thick branches caught hold of his long hair, and there he was left hanging, the mule walking away. A soldier of David's army saw Absalom in the oak, and told Joab. The captain asked why he had not killed him, and said that if he had, he would have given him ten shekels, or half crowns, and a girdle. The man said that though he had got a thousand shekels, he would not have touched Absalom, because of the charge that the king had given, when his army were setting out to the

fight. That charge Joab did not think it incumbent upon him to attend to: he went straight to the place where the prince was hanging, and shot him to the heart. Then sounding the trumpet, he called the people in from the pursuit. The war was at an end, now Absalom was dead. Ahimaaz, the young priest I have already spoken of, asked leave of Joab to carry the tidings of the battle to David.

Marianne. I wonder at his making such a request; I would not have liked to tell David that Absalom was dead. Did Joab let him go?

Grandfather. Joab said to them, "This day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead." The captain then said to Cushi. "Go, tell the king what thou hast seen." Cushi obeyed. Still Ahimaaz persisted in his request, and Joab at last agreed to let him go. They took different roads; Cushi went by the hill, Ahimaaz by the plain. Between the two gates of Mahanaim, the outer and inner gate, David was sitting, that as soon as possible he might hear the tidings that came. The watchman on the tower called out that he saw two men coming, both running along. "The running of the foremost, he said is like the running of Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok." "He is a good man," the king replied, "and cometh with good tidings." And so he did, for his first exclamation was, "All is well." Then falling down on his face he said, "Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lift up their hand against my lord the king." David ques-

tioned him about Absalom; but on that subject the young priest gave no information; he intimated to the king that another messenger had been sent, whose office it was to speak of the prince. Cushi now came forward, and congratulated the king upon his victory. "Is the young man Absalom safe?" the king anxiously inquired. The answer of Cushi was this, "The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is." The king had cause before to dread the worst, but the certainty of it overpowered him with sorrow. The joy of the victory was forgotten; at that moment he would rather it had been a defeat, so Absalom had been spared. He went up to the chamber over the gate to weep alone; but he could not restrain his grief, even when he was within the hearing of the people, for as he ascended the stairs he was saying, "Oh my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee! Oh Absalom, my son, my son!"

Marianne. Poor David, I am very sorry for him.

George. I am not at all sorry for him. He ought to have been very glad that the rebellion was got over so easily.

Grandfather. You are right, George, he ought to have been glad, and very thankful to God, who had given him the victory. Yet his excessive grief at the death of Absalom was very natural, and though it was not right, yet I think we ought to pity more than to blame him. The people heard of the king's sorrow,

and instead of returning in triumph, like conquerors, as they were, they crept into the city by stealth, as if they had been defeated. Joab was very angry, and represented to David how foolish his conduct was. The king profited by the rebuke, and ceased his lamentations. This example teaches us that when we are convinced of a fault we ought to amend it without delay.

George. Was that an end of David's wars?

Grandfather. No, he had yet another rebellion to subdue.

Marianne. But, grandfather, you have not told us what punishment the man got who threw stones at David and his followers when they were leaving Jerusalem.

Grandfather. Shimei, you mean. He was among the first who came to meet the king on his return to his capital. He fell down before David, confessed that he had sinned, and besought pardon. Before the monarch could intimate his wishes, Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, exclaimed, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord's anointed."

Marianne. I am sure he deserved it. I would have agreed with Abishai.

Grandfather. David did not agree with him, however; he spoke very indignantly to him. "What have I to do with you," he said, "ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me?"

Marianne. What did he mean by speaking in that way to Abishai?

Grandfather. He thought that Abishai did wrong in advising him to put Shimei to death, and therefore he looked upon him as his enemy. From the words of David on this subject, we learn to regard those as our greatest enemies who advise us to do what is wrong. Next came out Mephibosheth to meet the king. He was the lame son of Saul, of whom I spoke to you before. So greatly had he mourned for David's misfortunes, that all the time he was away he had not once changed his clothes, nor combed his hair. "Wherefore wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth?" said the king. "My lord, oh king," replied the son of Saul, "my servant deceived me; for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king, because thy servant is lame: And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God: Do therefore what is good in thine eyes; for all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table." He was so grateful for the king's kindness to him, and so thankful that he was returning to his capital in safety, that his own losses seemed to him of no importance.

George. Did he not ask back his estate then?

Grandfather. He did not; and when the king proposed that he and Ziba might divide the land, Mephibosheth replied,—"Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my Lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house."

George. But about the rebellion, grandfather, who was to blame for it?

Grandfather. The men of Israel were angry with the men of Judah for bringing back the king without consulting them; not that they were angry because David was brought back, but they thought that the tribe of Judah had no right to be foremost in the matter. The sons of Judah, instead of answering mildly when their brethren were displeased, spoke yet more fiercely than they had been spoken to. This increased the anger of the men of Israel, so that they listened not unwillingly to the words of Sheba, a bad man, who excited them to rebel. This Sheba belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. When he sounded a trumpet, and said, "We have no part in David; neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: Every man to his tents, oh Israel,"—then all the Israelites followed him; the tribe of Judah only remaining faithful to David. The king said to Amasa, "Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present."

George. Was not Joab his general? Why did he not tell him to assemble his army?

Grandfather. He had not forgiven him for putting Absalom to death; and even when, because Amasa stayed longer than the time given to him, David thought it necessary to send another leader, he did not send Joab, but Abishai, his brother. Joab, however, accompanied Abishai along with the king's guards. Near Gibeon they encountered Amasa, and the forces he had

raised. There did Joab, going up to him under pretence of friendship, most basely and treacherously murder him.

Marianne. What a bad man Joab was. Why did he murder Amasa?

Grandfather. He was jealous of him, because he had been appointed general in his place. When he had succeeded in ridding himself of his rival, he led the army on against Sheba. That rebel had taken refuge in Abel Bethmaachah, a city in the north of Canaan, in the lot of Naphtali. The men of Judah marched up to this city, and began to batter the wall to throw it down. A woman within perceived that if this were suffered to go on nothing else was to be looked for but destruction to the city, and death to its inhabitants. Their only hope was in making a treaty. So she went to the wall and asked to speak with Joab. The general drew near to her, and she reasoned with him upon the impropriety of attacking a city of the Israelites, inhabited by a peaceable people, without first offering terms of accommodation. Joab said that he had no wish to destroy the city; he only sought Sheba, the son of Bichri. "Deliver him only, and I will depart from the city." "His head shall be thrown to thee over the wall," the woman boldly replied; and she was as good as her word; for, by her wisdom, she prevailed upon the inhabitants of the city to cut off the head of the traitor, and cast it out to Joab. Then the general disbanded his army and returned to Jerusalem.

Marianne. David's wars would surely be all ended now?

Grandfather. No; the Philistines came up to attack the Israelites, and David himself went down at the head of his army to meet them. A giant was there, called Ishbibenob, who aimed at the life of David. The king of Israel, less able for the fatigues of war than he had been when he was young, was becoming faint, when Abishai came to his assistance and killed the Philistine. After their sovereign was rescued from this danger, the subjects of David resolved that he should never expose himself any more to the like. They said to him, "Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel." Some other battles took place with the Philistines during the reign of David; but we have no particular account of any of them.

Marianne. Had he no more trouble in his family?

Grandfather. His son Adonijah endeavoured to supplant Solomon as his successor, but the attempt was put down without a battle.

What do we learn from the example of Ittai the Gittite?

Sorrow for sin caused David to weep,—What does this teach us?

David prayed that the Lord would turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness,—What do we learn from this?

Ahithophel gave the wisest advice, yet the advice of Hushai was followed, because it pleased the Lord to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel,—What may we learn from this?

What are we taught by the miserable end of Ahithophel?

When Joab had represented to David that he had acted unwisely, the king altered his conduct,—What does his example teach us?

David thought it wrong to put Shimei to death, therefore he considered Abishai his enemy for advising it,—What may we learn from this?

IDOLATRY AND DEFEAT.

" Not to our names, Thou only just and true,
Not to our worthless names is glory due;
Thy power and grace, thy truth and justice claim
Immortal honours to thy sovereign name;
Thine through the earth from heaven, thy blest abode,
Nor let the heathens say, ' And where's your God?'

" Heaven is thine higher court, there stands thy throne,
And through the lower worlds thy will is done;
Our God framed all this earth, these heavens he spread;
But fools adore the gods their hands have made;
The kneeling crowd, with looks devout, behold
Their silver saviours, and their saints of gold.

" Vain are those artful shapes of eyes and ears;
The molten image neither sees nor hears;
Their hands are helpless, nor their feet can move,
They have no speech, nor thought, nor power, nor love;
Yet sottish mortals make their long complaints
To their deaf idols, and their moveless saints.

" The rich have statues well adorn'd with gold;
The poor, content with gods of coarser mould,
With tools of iron carve the senseless stock,
Lopt from a tree, or broken from a rock;
People and priest drive on the solemn trade,
And trust the gods that saws and hammers made.

" Be heaven and earth amaz'd! 'tis hard to say
Which is more stupid, or their gods or they:
Oh Israel, trust the Lord, He hears and sees,
He knows thy sorrows, and restores thy peace;
His worship does a thousand comforts yield,
He is thy help, and He thy heavenly shield."

WATTS.

THE next day was wet. We could not sit in the garden as we always had done before when grandfather was telling of the Bible battles. We all sat in the cottage; grandfather on his big chair, on one side of the window, George on a very high three-legged stool, and Johnnie and I on little stools within the recess of the window. I still remember the soft sound of the rain among the leaves, and its continual drop dropping into the tub which Peggy had put out to catch it. Never to this day do I read the dark stories of Zimri, Ahab, or any of that unbroken list of vicious kings by which the land of Israel was cursed—I can never read of these without fancying I see a dull grey sky and an abundance of fresh green foliage, all that met my outward gaze as I sat on the stool and looked to the window; and the sound that is in my ears when I read of those evil rulers, is that of rain softly falling—a pleasing sound, which teaches me to look with pity on the vices and follies of others; for does not the great Father of all, whom all have so greatly offended, does not He send rain upon the unjust as well as upon the just.

George began, when we were all well seated, by saying to grandfather that Solomon's was the next reign he must tell us about, for he was David's successor.

Grandfather. He was David's successor; but we have nothing to do with his reign. There was no war in it.

George. No war! I thought he was a very magnificent king.

Grandfather. So he was; but his magnificence arose not from foreign conquest, but from the prosperity of a great kingdom, at peace within and without. The unity of the sons of Jacob ended with him; for in the reign of his son Rehoboam, they were divided into two kingdoms, called the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, which never afterwards were reunited.

George. Then there would be a good deal of fighting in Rehoboam's reign?

Grandfather. Not very much.

George. Did he not try to prevent his subjects setting up a separate kingdom?

Grandfather. He assembled a hundred and eighty thousand chosen warriors to fight against Jeroboam, whom the ten revolting tribes had chosen for their king; but the Lord forbade him to fight. He sent the prophet Shemaiah to deliver this message:—"Thus saith the Lord, ye shall not go up nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house, for this thing is done of me." This command Rehoboam obeyed. He returned home to Jerusalem, and built several cities of defence, both in Judah and in Benjamin.

Marianne. Were these two the only tribes who remained with him?

Gandfather. The Levites from all parts of the country came to him afterwards, because Jeroboam put them away from being priests, and set up pretended

priests, to suit the pretended gods whom he taught the people to worship,—the calves that he had made.

Johnnie. Did he make calves for the people to worship? Why did he do that?

Grandfather. To draw the hearts of the people away from the temple, and from the worship of the true God. And they willingly suffered themselves to be led by him; but there were some of the people of those tribes who set their hearts to seek the Lord. They went to Jerusalem, and became subjects of Rehoboam.

Marianne. Then Jeroboam had been a bad man. Why did God not allow Rehoboam to punish him and the other people for rebelling? They deserved it, I am sure.

Grandfather. They did; but it was not the Lord's will that Rehoboam should punish them. He chose to do it himself in his own time and way, and very severely punished they were. In the list of their kings there is not one respectable character. They were all vicious and vile. They had rebelled against the sovereign whom God had set over them, and they were justly punished for it in being obliged to submit to these wicked princes.

George. Then was there no war in Rehoboam's reign at all?

Grandfather. There was a foreign invasion. As soon as Rehoboam thought himself secure in the kingdom, when he had fortified it by building the fenced cities of which I told you, then he forsook the law of the Lord,

and led away his subjects with him. For this the Lord made Shishak, king of Egypt, come up against Jerusalem. He came with twelve hundred chariots, and sixty thousand horsemen, and he took all the fenced cities in which the foolish people had trusted. The Lord sent Shemaiah to say to Rehoboam and to the princes of Judah,—"Thus saith the Lord, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak." Hearing this, the king and the princes confessed that they had done wrong, and said,—"The Lord is righteous." Because they humbled themselves, the Lord said that he would not destroy them, but that they must be made servants to Shishak, that they might know the difference between the service of the King of Heaven and the service of the kings of earth. It was the wealth of the kingdom of Judah which had tempted Shishak to come so far, and he was not disappointed. He emptied the king's treasury, which Solomon had filled; and he took the treasures of the temple, the golden shields which Solomon had made. Rehoboam made shields of brass to supply their place. So the son of Solomon was a very unfortunate king. We are told of him,—"And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord." This was the cause of all his misfortunes. He did not pray. May the knowledge of this lead us to pray more frequently, to seek from God guidance in every thing we do.

George. Was there no more war in Rehoboam's reign?

Grandfather. There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam as long as the former lived, but it was likely mere skirmishing, and probably was confined to those who lived near the borders. The successor of Rehoboam fought a great battle with Jeroboam.

George. Who was he then, grandfather; let us hear about it?

Grandfather. Rehoboam reigned eighteen years, and was succeeded by his son Abijah, an active and energetic prince. We are not told who began the war, but Abijah set the battle in array with an army of four hundred thousand valiant men of war.

George. That was a large army.

Grandfather. It was; but Jeroboam's was exactly twice as large, so that the two sides were very unequal as to numbers. Before the battle began Abijah stood on a hill, and made an address to Jeroboam and his soldiers; but the speech must have tended greatly to encourage the men of Judah and Benjamin. He argued that their cause was the just one, and that the Lord was with them, and with them only, because the subjects of Jeroboam had forsaken God, and served them that were no gods. "And behold," exclaimed Abijah to his rebellious and unbelieving brethren, "God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. Oh children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers, for ye shall not prosper." This speech of Abijah would not have been easily answered. Jeroboam

did not attempt to do it, but attacked the men of Judah without delay. He set an ambush behind them, thinking, no doubt, that he would with ease cut them all to pieces. And indeed it looked ill enough for the subjects of Abijah, when they saw that whether they looked forward or backward, there were foes to face. In this difficulty they cried to the Lord, and he answered their prayer by giving them a complete victory. The children of Israel fled, and five hundred thousand of them were slain that day by Abijah and his people. They pursued their victory, and took several cities which had belonged to Jeroboam. That king never recovered from the vexation of this defeat, though he lived for a year or two after.

George. And what more did Abijah do? did he fight another battle?

Grandfather. He did not do much more; he only reigned three years in all. He was succeeded by his son Asa, an excellent and pious prince, who reigned for forty years. During ten years of his reign the kingdom of Judah had peace. There was little peace in the sister kingdom. When Asa ascended the throne, Jeroboam was king of Israel; when Asa died, Ahab was king of Israel, and between Jeroboam and Ahab six kings reigned in Israel, so that in the course of the reign of Asa, king of Judah, eight different kings bore the sceptre in Israel.

George. What became of them all? did they die?

Grandfather. The greater number of them suffered death by violence. Jeroboam, after having reigned

twenty-two years, was smitten by the Lord and died, his son Nadab succeeding him. Nadab walked in the wicked ways of his father, and was permitted to reign only for two years. He was besieging Gibbethon, a city in the territories of the Danites, but which had belonged to the tribe of Levi; when that tribe was driven away by Jeroboam, they had been obliged to desert this city, and now the Philistines had taken possession of it. While Nadab was carrying on the siege, a conspiracy was formed against him among his own troops, and Baasha, of the tribe of Israel, slew him, and reigned in his stead. The first act of the new king was to kill all the descendants of Jeroboam, both male and female; not one was left alive.

Marianne. How horribly cruel.

Grandfather. Yes, Baasha was a barbarous man, but he was an instrument in the Lord's hand to execute the vengeance he had denounced against the first king of Israel, and his wicked family. "The Lord shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day," were the words of Abijah the prophet to the wife of Jeroboam, while her husband was yet alive. From the fate of Jeroboam and his family, we learn that punishment assuredly will follow sin, unless it be repented of.

Marianne. But were all Jeroboam's family bad people? Was there not one good among them?

Grandfather. One of them was pious, a son of Jeroboam, named Abijah, but he died young. He was taken

away from the evil to come; he only was permitted to go down to the grave in peace, because in him was found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel. Instead of being warned by the fate of his predecessors, Baasha went on in the same course of wickedness, and the Lord in displeasure sent a prophet to announce to him that his posterity also was to be cut off, and his house to be made like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat.

But we will return to Asa, who, after ten years of his reign had passed peacefully, was compelled to engage in war. Zerah, king of Ethiopia, came against him with a very numerous army, no less than a million of fighting men, besides three hundred chariots of war. Asa went out to meet them, and before the battle began he earnestly prayed to the Lord in these words: "Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power; help us, oh Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude: Oh Lord, thou art our God, let not man prevail against thee." The prayer was granted, the Ethiopians were smitten and fled. Asa and his people pursued them a long way, and took many cities from them, and carrying away much spoil, and cattle, sheep, and camels in abundance, they returned in triumph to Jerusalem. There they were met by the prophet Azariah who saluted them in these words, "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." These are precious words, my

children; you must all have them impressed on your memories, and I trust you may have them impressed on your hearts. They speak to us of comfort to those who trust in God, of encouragement to those who seek after him, and of punishment to those who wander from his ways.

George. Was there any more war in Asa's reign?

Grandfather. There was, but he did not act so wisely in his next difficulty. Baasha, king of Israel, went up against Judah, and his plan was to fortify the town of Ramah, by which means he would be able to cut off all communication between some parts of the country and the capital. Asa, for fear of him, determined to seek foreign aid. He collected all the silver and gold that was in his own treasury, and in the treasury of the temple, and sent it to Damascus to bribe Benhadad, king of Syria, to take up his quarrel against Baasha. This Benhadad agreed to do, although he had had a league with Baasha. The treaties of bad men are not to be trusted to. He sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel. They took several of them, so that Baasha was glad to leave Judah alone, and go to the defence of his own kingdom. The Lord was displeased with Asa; and he sent to him Hanani, the prophet, to tell him that because he had done foolishly, from henceforth he would have wars. We are not told the particulars of any of these wars, but we may be sure that when the Israelites saw Asa resort to a foreign power to assist him in overcoming them, it would embolden them to make further attempts against him. Yet, when com-

pared with the state of Israel, the state of Judah was a very enviable one. As the Lord had sent a prophet to warn Jeroboam that because of his wickedness his family would become extinct, Baasha having followed his evil example, received in his turn a message to the same effect by the prophet Jehu in these words:—"Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat."

Johnnie. Was Baasha killed then?

Grandfather. No. The evil that had been foretold came when his son was king. Elah, the son of Baasha, had reigned two years when a conspiracy was formed against him, headed by Zimri, one of his captains. The poor contemptible king was drinking to excess in the house of one of his servants when Zimri went in and killed him. As soon as Zimri had seated himself on the throne he had usurped, he slew not only all the descendants of Baasha, but all his relations and all his friends. But the triumph of the new king was short. The armies of Israel were at that time engaged in besieging Gibbethon, which the Philistines were still keeping possession of. News came to the army of the murder of the king, and of the usurpation of Zimri. It is not likely that they could feel much regret for the loss of their vicious sovereign, but they resolved that they would not have Zimri to reign in his stead; they all agreed in choosing Omri, the captain of the host, for their king. They then raised the siege of Gibbethon,

and marched against Tirzah, their own capital city, where Zimri was. Omri soon made himself master of the city, and Zimri took refuge in the palace. He saw that he could not long defend it, yet he was unwilling to give it up; so he set fire to it, and was himself consumed in the flames. Thus Zimri, after reigning only seven days, died the death of a coward.

Marianne. Then Omri would get the kingdom all to himself?

Grandfather. No; the Israelites were divided; half of them chose Tibni for their king, and the other half took arms in defence of Omri as their sovereign. Civil war continued for four years, when the death of Tibni settled the matter, and Omri remained sole sovereign.

Marianne. And was he a good king?

Grandfather. No. We are told that he did worse than all that were before him. Although his reign was longer than those of Zimri and Tibni, yet it was a short one. He reigned only seven years after the death of Tibni, and was succeeded by his son Ahab, who went a degree farther in wickedness than even Omri himself had done. He was led by Jezebel, his wicked queen, to worship Baal, whom her countrymen served as a god. In the fourth year of his reign Asa, king of Judah, died, and was succeeded by his son Jehoshaphat, who followed the good example of his father; he made it his endeavour to serve God and to do good to his subjects.

George. Did he and Ahab fight against each other?

Grandfather. No, they were only too good friends.

Marianne. How could they be *too* good friends, grandfather?

Grandfather. You shall hear, but I must give you an account of the first war in which Ahab was engaged. Jehoshaphat was not concerned in it. Benhadad, king of Syria, assembled a very large army, and marched against the king of Israel. The Syrian monarch had thirty-two kings with him, whether tributaries or allies we are not told, and he had horses and chariots in great number. Ahab, afraid to meet such a force in the field, shut himself up in Samaria, which was now the chief city of the land of Israel. Benhadad encamped near the city to besiege it, and sent messengers to Ahab to say to him, "Thus saith Benhadad, thy silver and thy gold is mine, thy wives also, and thy children, even the goodliest are mine." In reply the king of Israel said, "My lord, oh king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have."

George. What a cowardly fellow he must have been.

Grandfather. He was. Had he been a follower of the God of his fathers, he would have scorned to make such a reply, but a worshipper of Baal could not be otherwise than base. From Ahab's conduct in this matter we learn that it is those who fear not the Lord who have the greatest fear of man.

George. And what did Benhadad do next?

Grandfather. He sent a message to Ahab demanding him to deliver up to him his silver and gold, his wives and children. And that was not all: the next day,

about the same hour, he said he would send his servants to search the palace and the houses of the people in Samaria, and whatever the possessor valued most, that they were to take away. This was rather too much—even Ahab hesitated about yielding to it. Before returning an answer, he called together the elders of the land to hear their opinion on the matter. He told them how the case stood, what his former reply had been, and what was the last demand of Benhadad. With one voice the people and elders exclaimed, "Hearken not unto him, nor consent." Ahab then told the messengers of Benhadad to tell their king that though he was willing to agree to his first demand, it was not in his power to agree to this one. Benhadad was enraged, and sent a very angry message. "The gods do so unto me, and more also," he said, "if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me."

Johnnie. What did he mean by that, grandfather?

Grandfather. He meant that he would destroy Samaria so completely that the city would be reduced to dust, and that his army was such a very numerous one, each of them would not be able to get a handful of dust. Benhadad's words sounded great, but his actions were very contemptible. We learn from his conduct that those who boast much do little. He told his servants to prepare for battle and set themselves in array against the city. They obeyed, and instead of putting himself at their head, and leading them on to the attack, Benhadad with his thirty-two kings sat down in their pa*vilions* to drink.

In the meantime a prophet came to Ahab with a message from the Lord the true God, to say that He who has power over all was to deliver into the hands of the king of Israel the great multitude that had come against him, and the victory was to be obtained at once—that very day.

Marianne. But Ahab was a bad man, grandfather; why was he to get a victory?

Grandfather. God often makes use of one bad man to punish another. It was after Benhadad had daringly insulted the Most High by appealing to his gods in his message to Ahab, that the fate of his great expedition was proclaimed. And though the people of Israel had greatly offended God, still they were beloved for their fathers' sakes, and the God of their fathers shewed His mercy to them in delivering them from this threatened calamity. Agreeably to the instructions of the prophet, Ahab sent out two hundred and thirty-two young men, pages to the rulers of the provinces. Against the Syrians these young men were sent; by their means the victory was to be obtained. They were few in number, and unskilled in the art of war, but that would only make it the more clearly seen that the victory came from God. It was noon, and the despicable monarch of Syria with his thirty-two kings were seated in their pavilions drinking themselves drunk. News was brought that men had come out of Samaria. Benhadad gave orders that whatever their errand might be they must be taken prisoners,—a tyrannical command, and deservedly

punished; for these two hundred and thirty-two young men committed such havock among the Syrians, that the king, who could threaten better than he could fight, was glad to get on a horse and escape. Then the king of Israel, with the fighting men that had been in Samaria, seven thousand in number, came and completed the slaughter of the Syrian host. The victory was no sooner gained than the prophet who had foretold it came again to Ahab, warning him to be prepared for battle, for at the end of the year he might expect another invasion from the king of Syria.

Johnnie. I would have thought they would have been afraid to go back again when they had been beaten before by so few men.

Grandfather. They thought that their defeat the former time was owing to their not having chosen their ground wisely.

Johnnie. How not chosen their ground wisely?

Grandfather. Because they had fought in a hill country and been defeated, they believed that the Israelites worshipped gods of the hills; "but let us fight against them in the plain," the people of Syria said, "and surely we shall be stronger than they." The ignorant people had no knowledge of a God who is everywhere present. Thus confident of victory, they prepared an army as numerous as their former one, and marched to Aphek, a city in the tribe of Asher. The Israelites went there to meet them. There was a great contrast between the two armies: the children of Israel, we are told, were

like "little flocks of kids, but the Syrians filled the country."

Marianne. Ahab would be frightened then?

Grandfather. It is not unlikely that he was, because he must have felt that his false gods were feeble supports, and he could not look with confidence to the God whom he had disobeyed. But the Lord chose to vindicate the honour of His own name by shewing to the Syrians that He was sovereign ruler in all places. He sent a prophet to say to Ahab: "Thus saith the Lord, because the Syrians have said, the Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord." Seven days the two armies faced each other; on the seventh day they fought, and Israel was completely victorious, killing of the Syrians one hundred thousand men. The others fled to Aphek, where twenty-seven thousand were killed by the falling of the walls of the town. The city of their refuge proved their destruction. From their fate we learn that where we think ourselves secure danger may be near.

George. Was Benhadad killed?

Grandfather. No, he had hid himself.

George. Cowardly fellow!

Grandfather. Now that they were reduced to the last extremity, he and those who were with him resolved to submit to Ahab. Perhaps he would not be severe on them; and, at any rate, it was their only chance for life. The servants went first, dressed in sackcloth, and

with ropes on their heads. To Ahab they addressed these words: "Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee let me live." "Is he yet alive?" said the king of Israel; "he is my brother." The Syrians eagerly caught at the kindly expression, and repeated, "Thy brother Benhadad." So Ahab told them to bring their king, which they were not long in doing; and so kindly was he received, that the king of Israel even took him up in his chariot beside him. Then terms were dictated by Benhadad as if he had been the victor, and agreed to by Ahab as if he had been the conquered.

George. And what were the terms? Surely Benhadad was to give up something to Ahab?

Grandfather. Nothing except what rightfully belonged to him. He was only to get the cities of Israel which had been taken away by a former king of Syria; but he was to have one privilege which he had not had before, if it could be called a privilege. He was to have the right of making streets in Damascus.

George. What a poor king Ahab was; he did not know what to do with a victory when he had got it.

Marianne. But what should he have done?

Grandfather. He ought to have killed Benhadad. The Lord had marked him for destruction, and had permitted the king of Israel to be the instrument of punishing him.

Marianne. Yes, but Ahab had been sorry for Benhadad, and perhaps did not know that God meant that he should be killed.

Grandfather. He ought to have asked direction from God. He had been favoured with two wonderful victories, yet he never returned thanks for them, nor sought to know what the Lord would next have him to do. A prophet was sent to reprove him, and he proceeded in this manner. He commanded his neighbour, in the name of the Lord, to smite him. The man refused, and the prophet said, "Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the Lord, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee." It happened as the prophet had said: the man was killed by a lion. By the punishment which he met with we are taught to give strict obedience to the commands of God.

Marianne. But, grandfather, I do not understand why the prophet wished him to smite him. He surely did not do very wrong in refusing to do that.

Grandfather. When he knew that the command came from God, he certainly did wrong in refusing to obey it; but you will understand better the prophet's motives when you hear the rest of the story. The next man whom he asked to smite him was not so unwilling. He struck him so violently that he wounded him. The prophet bound up his head, and put ashes on his face, and waited by the wayside till the king was coming past. When he saw Ahab, he cried to him in these words, "Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle, and behold a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, 'Keep this man; if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou

shalt pay a talent of silver.' And as thy servant was busy here and there he was gone." This was the complaint he made; but Ahab saw no necessity for shewing mercy to him, although it was from carelessness, and not from crime, that he had forfeited his life. "So shall thy judgment be, thyself hast decided it." No sooner was this sentence pronounced than the prophet put off his disguise, and the king saw that he was a prophet. It was now the king's turn to hear his sentence. It was in these words: "Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people."

Marianne. Then it was a story that the prophet told, to shew the king that he deserved punishment.

Johnnie. But why did the prophet tell the man to strike him? I do not understand that yet.

Marianne. I think I do, though. Was it to shew that when the man was punished for not striking the good prophet when God commanded it, surely Ahab would be punished for not killing the bad Benhadad, when it was God's will that it should be done?

Grandfather. I see you understand it, Marianne. We shall now proceed to the next battle. A visitor came to Ahab, no less a person than Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. The king of Israel treated him with marked attention, and made great feasts for him and his people. They were nearly connected; for the son of Jehoshaphat had married the daughter of Ahab. Now Ben-

hadad, though he got off so easily when Ahab had him in his power, had not thought it necessary to fulfil his part of the bargain, which, as you may remember, was to give back to the Israelites all those cities that were their own. There was a city called Ramoth-Gilead, in the tribe of Gad, on the east side of the Jordan, a city of some importance, which Ahab desired to possess; so he proposed to his people that they should go and take it from the Syrians. He asked Jehoshaphat, too, to join in this expedition. "I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses," was the king of Judah's reply. It was a kind and friendly speech, but out of place when addressed to so bad a man as Ahab was.

Marianne. I like Jehoshaphat, grandfather; he had been so kind a man.

Grandfather. And he was a truly pious man too. He would not go up to the battle without seeking direction from God. He proposed to Ahab that they should inquire at the word of the Lord. The king and queen of Israel were idolaters; they had established the worship of Baal as the religion of the land, and they had persecuted even to the death all the worshippers of the living God. Yet, even in their wicked court, Jehoshaphat openly did homage to the God of his fathers, and endeavoured to make these idolaters join him. His example teaches us never to be ashamed of our religion, and always to try to do good wherever we are. So Ahab gathered his prophets together—about four

hundred of them there were—and to them he put the question, "Shall I go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall I forbear?" Unanimously they replied, "Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king." Yet, though four hundred prophets agreed in saying this, Jehoshaphat was not satisfied. There was something about these men which made him suspect they were not prophets of the Lord. But he was too polite to say anything against them, he merely asked Ahab, "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?"

Marianne. But were they not good prophets, grandfather? They said "the Lord shall deliver it."

Grandfather. Yes, they named the name of the Lord, but it was only to please Jehoshaphat that they did so. For truth they did not care; they sought only to please the two kings. They knew Ahab wished to go to Ramoth-Gilead, so they told him to go. One of them, called Zedekiah, made horns of iron, and said, "Thus saith the Lord, with these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them."

Johnnie. And was there not another prophet besides these?

Grandfather. Yes, there was one, but Ahab was unwilling to apply to him, because he said he always prophesied evil concerning him. However, to please Jehoshaphat he consented to have him called. Micaiah was the name of this prophet. The messenger who was sent for him advised him to follow the example of the

other prophets, to say as they had said, because their words had pleased the king. "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak," was the prophet's reply. Seated each on a throne, dressed in their royal robes, were the kings of Israel and Judah, when Micaiah was brought forward. To him Ahab addressed the same question as he had done to the four hundred. "Go and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king," was the answer of Micaiah.

Marianne. Then he gave the same answer as the other prophets. I thought their prophecy was not true.

Grandfather. Their prophecy was false, for it deceived Ahab, yet it was so expressed that it might be understood in different senses. "The Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king." They did not say what it was, nor what king was meant. Ahab understood it to mean Ramoth-Gilead, and that the king was himself, but it might have meant Israel, and Benhadad might have been the king alluded to. The prophecy was a vague one, and it was in mockery that Micaiah repeated it. Ahab saw that he spoke ironically. He besought him not to jest, but to speak the truth in the name of the Lord. The prophet then solemnly replied, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd; and the Lord said, 'These have no master; let them return every man to his house in peace.'" The king of Israel turned to Jehoshaphat and said, "Did I not tell thee that he would prophecy no good concerning me, but evil?"

Johnnie. What evil did he prophecy?

Marianne. The shepherd, you know, meant Ahab, and the prophecy said that he was dead, and his people left without a master. Tell on, grandfather; what did Jehoshaphat say?

Grandfather. He said nothing then, for Micaiah spoke again:—"Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead? And one said in this manner, and another said in that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: Go forth and do so." When Micaiah ceased speaking, Zedekiah the prophet, who had made the horns, rudely attacked him, struck him, and mocked him. Micaiah then foretold of him that when danger came he would be hiding himself in an inner chamber. The king of Israel then gave orders that Micaiah be taken into custody. "Put this fellow in prison," he said "and feed him with bread of affliction, and with water of affliction, until I come in peace." Micaiah boldly replied, "If thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me." He called on the assembled multitude, too, to take notice of his words. "Hearken, oh people, every one of you." The two kings then, with their armies, marched up to *Ramoth*-Gilead.

Marianne. Did Jehoshaphat go? He ought not to have gone after he had heard Micaiah's prophecy.

Grandfather. No, he ought not; he was too staunch a friend to the wicked Ahab. From the prophecy delivered by Micaiah we learn two things,—that there are always malicious spirits seeking to persuade us to do wrong, and that those who do not seek direction from God are justly left to the guidance of those evil spirits. Perhaps the prophecy had more effect on Ahab's mind than he chose to confess. At any rate, his courage failed when he drew near the place of danger. He fell on a plan, by means of which he thought the evil would come upon Jehoshaphat, and not upon him. He proposed to that king to enter the battle dressed in his royal robes, while he himself would go disguised.

George. Jehoshaphat would not do that, I think?

Grandfather. The king of Judah was not a coward. He made no objection to agreeing to the mean and selfish proposal. Now the king of Syria gave this command to his captains, "Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel." When they saw Jehoshaphat, supposing him to be the king of Israel, they directed all their force against him. Jehoshaphat cried out, not to his enemies for mercy, nor to his friends for assistance, but to his God he cried; and did not cry in vain. Nor did the king of Israel save his life by his stratagem. A bow drawn at a venture smote him between the joints of his harness, and the wound was mortal. But he lived till evening,—lived

long enough to see the Syrians victorious, and long enough to hear the proclamation made, that the Israelites, having lost their master, might now return to their homes in peace.

Marianne. Did Jehoshaphat get home safe after the battle?

Grandfather. Yes; but he was met by a rebuke. Jehu, the prophet, came out to meet him and said, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?—therefore is wrath upon thee from the Lord." Jehoshaphat sincerely repented of his error, and endeavoured to do all the good he could to his people.

George. Was there any more war in his reign?

Grandfather. Yes; a foreign enemy came against him; but we must leave the consideration of that event till to-morrow, if we are spared.

Rehoboam did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord. Because of this, misfortunes came upon him,—Knowing this, what ought we to do?

When Asa was returning from the battle against the Ethiopians, the prophet Azariah met him, and spoke to him,—What are we taught by the words of the prophet on this occasion?

What do we learn from the cowardly reply of Ahab to Benhadad's insolent demand?

Benhadad's words were big, but his deeds were small,—What are we shewn by this?

Twenty-seven thousand were killed by the falling of the walls of Aphek after having escaped from battle,—What do we learn from their fate?

At the idolatrous court of Ahab and Jezebel, Jehoshaphat openly shewed his reverence for the God of his fathers, and endeavoured to lead the king of Israel to do the same,—What does his example teach us?

From the prophecy delivered by Micaiah, what do we learn?

ELISHA.

" He seems a being who hath known
Communion with his God alone;
On earth by nought but pity's tie,
Detain'd a moment from on high;
One to sublimer worlds allied,
One from all passions purified;
Ev'n now half mingled with the sky,
And all prepared, oh! not to die;
But, like the prophet, to aspire
In heaven's triumphal car of fire."

MRS HEMANS.

THE day that followed was the day of rest. The rain still continued. While we sat at breakfast George said, " We shall not be going to church to-day, gandfather; what shall we do?"

" Why do you think that we shall not go to church?" grandfather asked.

" Because it is a wet day."

" And is that a reason for staying away from church, George? If a week day happened to be wet and you had no meat in the house for dinner, would you do without any rather than send the servant out in the rain? And no longer ago than yesterday evening, it was your-

self, I think, who discovered that Peggy must go to the village, wet evening though it was, to buy bread, because we had not enough in the house to serve till next day."

"Yes, grandfather," said George, "but that is a different thing—we must have bread you know—we cannot do without food."

"True, my boy," grandfather replied, "we must have food; but we need food for our minds as much as we need food for our bodies. Daily instruction is as necessary to strengthen our minds as daily bread is to support our bodies. It is an evil, and a very common one I fear, to starve the most important part of ourselves without the least compunction."

What grandfather had said was strange to me, and I was not sure that I rightly understood him yet, so I asked him if we could not get food for our minds on Sabbath without going to church, and how we get it on the days when we did not go there.

"The mental food that we daily need, Marianne, is the teaching of the Word and the teaching of the Spirit, and wherever we may be, or however busily we may be occupied, there never is a day that we may be excused in neglecting to take a little of His word into our hearts, and to pray to God for His sanctifying grace."

"But," said George, "we might read the Bible, and think about it, and say our prayers at home; we do not need to go to church for that."

"If we really thought ourselves, George, what in our

prayers we say we do, weak, erring creatures, prone to that which is evil and backward to that which is good; if we really thought ourselves so, we would gladly and eagerly embrace every means of improvement which a merciful God has put within our power."

Then I asked grandfather if he thought it was very wrong in anybody to stay away from church?

"Unless they have a good reason for doing so, Marianne," he replied.

"And what would you think a good reason, grandfather?" I asked, for I really wished to know.

"If we were bedridden, or lame, or blind, and had no one to lead us, or if the roads were impassable, or the church at too great a distance, or if we were so unwell that we could not join in the services if we were there,—all these would be good reasons for our absence. There may be others which I have not mentioned. Some may stay away from church occasionally from a praiseworthy motive; they may deny themselves that pleasure that others may enjoy it. I cannot tell you all the circumstances in which people may be to blame or may not. When they absent themselves from the church of God, the decision of the matter must rest between their conscience and their God. But this I will say, Marianne, that if people stay away from church for a reason which they would not think sufficient to prevent them from attending to their worldly occupations, they act sinfully."

We were silent for a little time. I did not like to ask

anything else, and George did not seem to have anything more to say; but in a minute or two grandfather spoke again, and the words he said I have often thought of since; they impressed me as much I think as any words I ever heard from grandfather.

"We live not for ourselves. By going to church we express that we seek the good of others, and frequent the house of prayer that we may pray for them. We are very apt to err; in going to church we say that we cannot do what is right of ourselves, and desire the prayers of our fellow christians. By choosing to absent ourselves from church, we say by our actions that we do not care for the good of others, and do not desire their prayers."

Nothing more was said at that time on the subject of going to church. The remainder of the day passed as usual. It cleared up, I remember, about mid-day; the sun was shining brightly as we walked home in the afternoon. In the evening when we had taken our usual seats grandfather began thus:—

Grandfather. I told you that a foreign enemy came against Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and a very formidable enemy it was. The Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Edomites assembled their united forces, and marched to attack him. A great multitude they were. When Jehoshaphat heard of their coming he gave himself up to prayer, and proclaimed a fast throughout the land of Judah. The people heartily joined with him; they gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord,—

teaching us by their example that we ought to unite in prayer when we wish assistance from God, and we have always need of help from him. From all the cities of Judah the people journeyed to Jerusalem, there to pray to God in the temple. Jehoshaphat led their devotions; and his prayer on that occasion was a very beautiful one. He acknowledged the sovereignty of Jehovah,—that he was ruler over all parts of the world. He pleaded that he had given that land to the children of Israel, and had driven out the inhabitants of it before them;—they had not been suffered to invade the children of Lot and the children of Esau: now, when these very people so ungratefully were coming up against them, would not their God defend his chosen people. "Oh, our God," said the King of Judah in his prayer, "wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee." Nor did these words come from the king's heart alone, but all the men, women, and children of Judah felt the same.

George. But was the king not getting his troops ready? The enemy would be taking them by surprise.

Grandfather. Without doubt he would be making all needful preparations; he who prays well is not likely to neglect any part of his duty. Nor did he pray in vain: An answer speedily arrived. The Spirit of the Lord came upon a Levite of the name of Jahaziel, who was standing amongst the people. He spoke, telling them not to fear, for the battle was not theirs, but God's.

He gave them directions about the motions of the enemy, and told them where they would find them, but that they would not need to fight. "Stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, oh Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to-morrow go out against them, for the Lord will be with you." On hearing the words of Jehaziel, Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face to the ground to shew the reverence with which he received a message sent from the Lord by his servant. The people all bowed down, following the example of their king; and when they stood up, they praised the Lord with loud voices. Early the next morning the people of Judah rose, and as they were going forth, Jehoshaphat called to them,—"Hear me, oh Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem: believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established: believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." This was the address the pious king of Judah made to his soldiers; and a more suitable speech he could not have made, for the heart that trusts in God is fixed and fearless. In the van of the army singers were placed; and this was the burden of their song,—"Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever."

Marianne. Their enemies must have thought it very strange when they saw them coming singing to them.

Grandfather. Their enemies were too much taken up with themselves to cast a thought on those they had come so far to fight against. The swords which they had prepared for slaying the Israelites they turned against

each other, and blindly and furiously they fought till all were slain.

Johnnie. I do not understand it, grandfather. Who was it that fought?

Grandfather. The Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Edomites, who had come up with intent to destroy the men of Judah, set upon each other instead. Why they did this we cannot tell. The sacred historian tells us that "the Lord set ambushments against them, and that by these ambushments they were smitten." Now, it is not unlikely that these foreign invaders may have set parties in ambush to take by surprise the children of Judah, when they came out to defend their country. This may have been; but whether this were so or not, certain it is, that by the over-ruling providence of God, confusion fell upon the children of Lot and the children of Esau, so that they attacked their allies instead of their enemies. The children of Ammon and the children of Moab fiercely attacked the inhabitants of Mount Seir, and killed every one of them. When they had utterly destroyed the dwellers in the mountain, then did the descendants of Lot fall upon each other, and fought until not one of all that vast multitude remained to tell the tale. Thus it was that the Lord fought for his people, and so it came to pass as the Lord had foretold, that the battle was not theirs but God's. From this we learn that those who pray shall prosper.

George. I never heard of such an easy won battle. You could hardly call it a battle at all, for Jehoshaphat *and his* people had nothing to do but to look on.

Marianne. But did the people of Judah see their enemies killing each other?

Grandfather. When the people of Judah arrived at the watch tower in the wilderness, the sight which met their eyes—and a strange sight, doubtless, they must have thought it—was a multitude of dead bodies where so lately had been an army of living men. A solemn sight that battle field must have been. Round and round those bodies lay, clad in splendid garments, glittering with gold and precious stones. So great was the riches that the people of Jehoshaphat were three days in the gathering of it. Useless that wealth was now to those who lately had thought so much of it. From this we see the folly of setting our hearts on the treasures of earth. For this signal mercy vouchsafed to them, the children of Judah assembled in a valley to give thanks to their God, and that religious act of theirs gave a name to the valley. It was called the valley of Barechab, or of blessing.

George. And had Jehoshaphat any more war in his reign?

Grandfather. He engaged in another war which I will now give you an account of. Jehoram, the son of Ahab, was now king of Israel. He commenced his reign in the eighteenth year of the reign of Jehoshaphat in Judah.

George. Was Jehoram Ahab's successor?

Grandfather. Ahaziah succeeded his father Ahab, but he only reigned two years, and at his death his brother Jehoram ascended the throne.

Johnnie. Was Jehoram a good king?

Marianne. You need not ask, for all the kings of Israel were bad.

Grandfather. He was a wicked man, although not like his father and his mother, a worshipper of Baal. He was perhaps the best of his family, but they were a vile family, and the best was bad. During the reign of Ahab the Moabites had been tributaries to the king of Israel. When Ahab died, Mesha, king of Moab, rebelled. Although Ahaziah was two years on the throne, he made no attempt to recover this part of his revenue, —the hundred thousand rams and the hundred thousand lambs which the king of Moab had been in the habit of paying yearly. As soon as Jehoram was king of Israel he resolved to demand his right, so he assembled an army and prepared to march against Mesha. He sent to ask the assistance of Jehoshaphat in this undertaking. The king of Judah gave to him the same reply as he had given to his father when he asked him to go with him against the king of Syria,—"I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses."

Marianne. I would have thought Jehoshaphat would not have joined with one of the wicked kings of Israel again; he had not gained much by it I daresay.

Grandfather. He did not. He very nearly lost his life in the expedition. Jehoram consulted him about the road they ought to take to the land of the Moabites. Jehoshaphat advised the way through the wilderness of Edom.

Johnnie. Was that the nearest way?

Grandfather. It was not the nearest way, but they

went by it that they might see if the king of Edom would go with them. He went with them; and the three kings travelled on together for seven days. At the end of that time they could go no farther, for they were in a barren wilderness; their supply of water was exhausted; and it then seemed as if nothing else could be looked for than that those kings, with their armies, and the cattle that accompanied them, should die of thirst. When this fearful death was staring them in the face, Jehoshaphat asked if there was a prophet of the Lord there. They had been long of thinking of inquiring of the Lord; perhaps if they had done so sooner they might not have been suffered to fall into this danger; but better seek help from Heaven late than seek it not at all.

Johnnie. Was there a prophet there?

Grandfather. Yes, Elisha was with the army?

Marianne. Elisha? Was not that the name of the prophet who killed the captains and all their soldiers when they came to take him, and who raised to life again the little boy who died on his mother's knee?

Grandfather. There were two prophets living at the same time with names very nearly the same, Elijah and Elisha. They were both very eminent men of God, and worked many miracles. It was Elijah who caused fire to come down from heaven to consume the soldiers,—a hundred and two men,—whom Ahaziah, king of Israel, sent to take him; and it was Elisha—that same Elisha who now appeared before the three kings in the wilder-

ness of Edom—who raised to life the little boy of whom you have heard. Many more miracles these two prophets did, God giving them power, that his name might be glorified.

Johnnie. Tell us about some of the miracles, grandfather. I would like to hear about the little boy. What was the matter with him? and what did the prophet do to restore him to life?

Grandfather. Another time I may tell you more particularly about him, and about the other wonderful things which were done by Elijah and Elisha; but at present we must keep to the battles, as that is the course we have undertaken to go through. The prophet Elisha had much to do with war, so we see a good deal of him. When it was told to the kings that the great prophet was there, they went to seek him. When he saw them, he spoke thus to the king of Israel: "What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother." Jehoram pleaded that here were three kings who were in imminent danger. He seems to have thought only of the kings, the people were not worthy to be thought of; the heart of the idolatrous king did not beat warmly for his subjects. His speech made no impression on Elisha. "Were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah," said the prophet, "I would not look towards thee, nor see thee."

Johnnie. And what did he tell them to do?

Grandfather. He told them to dig ditches, so many

that the valley they were in would be full of them. There would be no rain, he said, yet these ditches would be filled with water; and not only were their wants to be supplied, but they would without doubt be victorious. The Lord was to deliver the Moabites into their hands, that they might lay waste the country of Moab. As the prophet had said, so it came to pass; abundance of water was provided. The Moabites, in the meantime, having heard that these three kings were coming against them, assembled a numerous army, and stood in the border of their country. Early in the morning, when the sun rose, it shone red upon the water, and made it look like blood. "This is blood," the Moabites cried; "the kings are surely slain; they have smitten one another, now therefore Moab to the spoil." Eagerly they rushed against the Israelites, and found that people prepared for them. They rose up and smote the children of Moab, who fled before them. It was a complete victory. They destroyed the cities as they had been directed to do by Elisha. The capital of Moab was called Kirharaseth. The king of Moab took refuge there; and the armies of Israel and Edom laid siege to it. The king of Moab, seeing himself in great danger, attempted to break through at the side where the Edomites were, but failed. Then he fell upon a fearful plan. His eldest son, the heir of his throne, he offered up for a burnt-offering, to obtain the favour of his demon-god. On the wall of the city this was done,—full in the view of the Moabites within, and of their enemies without.

Johnnie. But what good could that do him, grandfather?

Grandfather. It made the Israelites raise the siege, for they were shocked at having driven them to such an extremity.

Marianne. But it was not their fault, grandfather; they could not be blamed for it.

Grandfather. True, they could not be blamed for it, and yet they had caused it. Their conduct in this teaches us that we ought to alter our line of action, if by it we have been even the innocent cause of others having erred.

George. Was there any more war in Elisha's time?

Grandfather. There was. The king of Syria prepared an expedition against Israel. He meant to fall upon them unawares; but, to his surprise, the king of Israel was made acquainted with all his plans. Not once only, nor twice, did this happen, but again and again. The king of Syria was greatly distressed. He called his people together, and spoke to them thus:—"Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?" "None, my Lord, O king," one of his servants replied; "but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber." So were these heathens obliged to confess that to the God of Israel all things were known. "Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him," said the king, when he was told who was the informer. When he found out that Elisha was in Dothan, he sent

there horses and chariots and a great army—by night they went—and surrounded the city. When the servant of Elisha rose in the morning, and saw the host that compassed the city, he was very much afraid. "Alas, my master," he said, "how shall we do?" "Fear not," the man of God replied, "for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

Johnnie. What did he mean by that, grandfather? Was there a large army in Dothan?

Grandfather. He meant that God was on his side. He prayed that the eyes of his servant might be opened, that he might see how the God of Israel protected his faithful people. The eyes of the young man were opened, and he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about the prophet. Then Elisha prayed that the people of Syria might be smitten with blindness. The prayer was granted. Then not knowing where they were going, they suffered themselves to be led to Samaria.

Johnnie. Where was Samaria?

Grandfather. It was the capital of the kingdom of Israel. When the Syrians entered it, in answer to the prayer of Elisha, their eyes were again opened, and they saw themselves entirely in the power of the king of Israel. Jehoram was doubtless both pleased and surprised when he saw his enemies in his power. "My father, shall I smite them?" he said to Elisha. But this the prophet forbade. "Set bread and water before them," he said, "that they may eat and drink and go to their

master." Jehoram obeyed the command of the prophet. He treated the Syrians kindly, and sent them away safely. Elisha here sets us an example of doing good to them that hate us.

Marianna. The Syrians would not try to take Elisha again?

Grandfather. We are told that in consequence of this failure, "the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel." But we are immediately afterwards told that Benhadad, king of Syria, assembled all his armies, and laid siege to Samaria. The people within the city were reduced to great extremities. Food was so scarce that an ass' head was sold for five pounds, and a small quantity of coarse grain for five pieces of silver, each piece of silver being about the value of half-a-crown.

Johnnie. An ass' head, grandfather! we do not eat asses. They would not be good for food?

Grandfather. In time of famine, my boy, people are glad to eat anything that can satisfy hunger. When we hear of what others have suffered from want of food, it ought to teach us thankfulness that we have abundance. While the city of Samaria was in this state of distress, as the king was walking along, a woman cried to him, "Help, my lord, O king." "If the Lord do not help thee," said the king, "whence shall I help thee?" He thought she asked for food, and he had none to give her. "What aileth thee?" he said to her. The woman told her tale, and it was a

very sad one. She and one of her neighbours had made an agreement that they would kill and eat their children. This woman who was speaking to the king had killed her son; but when they had eaten him, her neighbour refused to fulfil her part of the agreement. When the king heard these words, he rent his clothes and said in anger, "God do so and more also to me if the head of Elisha, the son of Shaphat, shall stand on him this day."

Marianne. What did he mean by that, grandfather? He could not think Elisha was to blame for the famine that had come?

Grandfather. Jehoram was an ungrateful prince. Frequently the prophet had delivered him from the power of his enemies, and yet he seeks his life. Elisha was sitting in his house when the messenger of the king arrived. His errand, however, was in vain. He was followed by the king himself, and to him Elisha foretold that a time of plenty was near. "To-morrow about this time," the prophet said, "shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria."

Johnnie. Whether was that dear or cheap, grandfather?

Grandfather. It was about the ordinary price. The words of Elisha seemed to have been heard by the king in silence, but they excited the ridicule of a nobleman who was with him. He said mockingly to Elisha, "If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this

thing be." "Behold," replied the prophet, "thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof." That night the Lord sent terror into the host of the Syrians; he caused them to hear a noise of horses and chariots, like the approach of a great army. They concluded that the king of Israel had hired against them the kings of the Hittites and of Egypt.

George. That was not a very likely thing, when Jehoram was so closely besieged in his own capital.

Grandfather. It was not at all a likely thing; but the wisest of men tells us, that "the wicked fleeth when no man pursueth," and so it was here. The Syrians rose and fled, leaving tents, horses, and everything.

Johnnie. Did the Israelites see them running away?

Grandfather. They did not, for their flight was in the dark. At the gate of Samaria sat four leprous men. "Why sit we here, until we die," they said; "if we will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there, and if we sit still here we die also." They agreed to try the Syrians: it was possible they might save them alive, and it was their only chance of life. When these lepers entered the Syrian camp, they went into a tent: No one was there, but food and drink, silver and gold, and fine raiment in plenty. They satisfied their hunger, and carried away and hid what seemed to them valuable. They entered another tent and did the same. Then their consciences smote them for keeping all the good things to themselves. "If we tarry till the morning light," they said,

"some mischief will come upon us; now, therefore, come, and we will tell the king's household." As they had spoken, so they acted. They told the porter of the city, and soon the happy news spread. The king was at first afraid; he thought it was a stratagem on the part of the Syrians. "They know that we be hungry," he said, "therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, when they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city." One of the king's servants proposed that five horsemen should be sent to spy out where the Syrians were. Only two horses, it seems, could be found; but they were sent. They followed the Syrians as far as the Jordan. All the road was strewed with garments and vessels, which, in their haste, the affrighted Syrians had cast away. When the king heard this, he suffered the people to go out, and take all that was in the Syrian camp; so flour and barley were sold at the prices that Elisha had foretold.

Marianne. And what became of the nobleman who did not believe the words of the prophet?

Grandfather. The king gave him the charge of the gate of the city, and the starving people, as they pressed out, eager for food, trode to death the scoffing nobleman. So he saw the plenty, but it was that very plenty which caused his death.

Marianne. You have not told us anything about Jehoshaphat in these wars. Is there to be nothing more about him?

Grandfather. Nothing. That pious king died in the eighth year of Jehoram, king of Israel, and was succeeded by his son, also called Jehoram. The first act of Jehoram was an act of cruelty;—he put to death all his brethren, and many of the princes of Israel.

Marianne. That was strange, grandfather, that he should be so bad a king, when his father had been so good a man.

Grandfather. We are told that "he walked in the way of the kings of Israel," because the daughter of Ahab was his wife. Because he wandered from the ways of the Lord, trouble came upon him. The Edomites revolted; they cast off the yoke of the descendants of Jacob, as had been foretold by Isaac their father, in the blessing he gave to Esau. Jehoram made an attempt to subdue them, but failed. Libnah also, a city of Judah which belonged to the Levites, cast off the authority of the king.

George. I hope that foolish king did not live long; surely the next one would do better.

Grandfather. Jehoram did not reign long—eight years in all, and four years after his father's death. But his successor was not much better than he. He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, with which he was connected. We do not hear of any war in which he engaged. But he went to visit the king of Israel, after he had been fighting with the Syrians. The armies of Israel had gone to besiege Ramoth-Gilead, which was in the hands of Hazael, king of Syria. The king was

wounded, and retired to Jezreel to be healed of his wounds. Ahaziah, son and successor of Jehoram, king of Judah, went to pay a friendly visit to the son of Ahab, in Jezreel, during his illness. Meantime the hosts of Israel still lay encamped before Ramoth-Gilead. One day while the generals were sitting together, a young prophet entered, and declared that he had an errand to one of them. The one to whom he had an errand was called Jehu, and the errand was to anoint him king of Israel.

Johnnie. But why was he to be anointed king? Jehoram was not dead, was he?

Grandfather. He was not; but Jehu was the instrument used by God to put to death all the descendants of the wicked Ahab. When the captains knew that Jehu was anointed by the prophet, they blew trumpets and made proclamation, saying, "Jehu is king." Jehu then entered his chariot and drove to Jezreel. A watchman on the tower of that city said to the king, "I see a company." Jehoram replied, "Take a horseman and send to meet them, and let him say, Is it peace?" It was done. The question was put to Jehu; but little satisfaction was obtained from him. "What hast thou to do with peace?" he said; "turn thee behind me." A second messenger on horseback was sent, and he met with the same treatment from Jehu. Then the king of Israel ordered his own chariot to be prepared, and he and Ahaziah, king of Judah, went out to meet the company. "Is it peace, Jehu?" said Jehoram.

"What peace," replied the newly anointed king, "so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezreel are so many?" "There is treachery, O Ahaziah," said the king of Israel, turning to flee. In vain he tried to escape. With all his strength Jehu drew a bow,—the arrow entered the heart of Jehoram,—he fell to rise no more. Jehu commanded his captain to cast the body of the king into the field of Naboth.

Marianne. Who was Naboth, grandfather? I do not think you told us anything about him?

Grandfather. He was an inhabitant of Jezreel, whom Ahab put to death because he coveted his fields. Because of this wickedness of Ahab, Elijah the prophet foretold the ruin of his house, and now it had come, and Jehu was their executioner. Because Ahaziah, king of Judah, was related to them and resembled them, he shared in their doom. He was smitten by command of Jehu, and soon after died of his wounds, having reigned only one year. From his fate we learn, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but the companion of fools shall have poverty enough."

George. What did Jehu do next?

Grandfather. He caused the wicked queen Jezebel to be put to death; and the prophecy of Elijah the Tishbite with regard to her was literally fulfilled. Her body was eaten by dogs in the streets of Jezreel.

Johnnie. I did not know, grandfather, that dogs ate dead bodies.

Grandfather. They do not in this country, but those

who have travelled in the East tell us that such things are not unusual. With us the dog is kindly treated: he is the companion and the friend of man. But there he is an outcast, owned by no one, dreaded and avoided by the people. Ahab had seventy sons and grandsons. They, with their guardians and tutors, were in Samaria. To those guardians Jehu wrote, saying, "Look even out the best and meetest of your master's sons, and set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house." This letter caused great fear in those to whom it was addressed. They returned the reply to Jehu, that they were his servants, and would do whatever he bade them. He wrote a second letter, telling him to cut off the heads of the king's sons, and send them to him in baskets. They obeyed; nor was this enough for Jehu. He slew besides all the connexions of Ahab, the priests and the great men, until none were left in Jezreel. He then set off to Samaria. As he was on the way, he met the brethren of Ahaziah, king of Judah: "Who are ye?" he said to them. "We are the brethren of Ahaziah," they replied, "and we go down to salute the children of the king and the children of the queen."

Marianne. Had they not heard that Jehoram and all the sons of Ahab were dead?

Grandfather. They had not; the work of vengeance had been quickly accomplished. These brethren of Ahaziah shared the fate of those they intended to visit. By the command of Jehu all were slain—forty-two men.

Marianne. I don't like Jehu very well for killing so many people, although of course they deserved it.

Grandfather. It was the will of God that he should put all these people to death, therefore in so far he did right, yet he was not a good man. He killed all the worshippers of Baal, and broke down the images of that false god; but he encouraged the people to worship the golden calves which had been set up by Jeroboam, the first king of Israel.

Marianne. I do not understand, grandfather, why the kings of Israel persisted in worshipping these golden calves; they must have known it was wrong.

Grandfather. The worship of the calves was begun and kept up to prevent the ten tribes from going up to Jerusalem to worship, because if they did that, they might again submit themselves to the house of David. Jehu did away with the worship of Baal, because that could be no advantage to him; the worship of the golden calves he thought tended to the strengthening of his kingdom, therefore he encouraged it. The misfortunes that came upon him in consequence teach us that we ought not to consider what is gainful but what is good; that we ought willingly to bear worldly loss if we cannot prosper but by encouraging sin.

George. What misfortunes came upon him?

Grandfather. Hazael, king of Syria, fought against him successfully, but we are not told the particulars of any of their battles. After reigning twenty-eight years he was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz. He had the

same annoyance to bear from Hazael, who afflicted the Israelites grievously, so that of the great armies they had once had—their hundreds of thousands—there remained only fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen. In his distress the king of Israel prayed to God, who in mercy sent a deliverer in the person of the successor of Jehoahaz.

George. Who was he, and what did he do?

Grandfather. He was called Jehoash, but we must not enter upon his reign to-night, for it gets late.

Because Jehoshaphat prayed, the Lord fought for his people, and delivered them from their enemies,—What do we learn from this?

The great wealth of the children of Lot and Esau went to enrich their enemies,—What does this shew us?

The children of Israel, shocked at having driven the king of Moab to such an extremity, raised the siege of Kirharaseth,—What does their conduct teach us?

When Elisha had the Syrians in his power, he caused them to be treated with kindness and sent away in safety,—What does his example teach us?

What do we learn from hearing what others have suffered by famine?

Amaziah met his death because he chose for his intimate friend the wicked king of Israel,—What does his fate teach us?

What are we taught by the misfortunes that came upon Jehu in consequence of his upholding the worship of the golden calves?

THE NIGHT OF ISRAEL.

"Alas! we were warn'd, but we reck'd not the warning,
Till our warriors grew weak in the day of despair,
And our glory was fled as the light cloud of morning,
That gleams for a moment, and melts into air.

"As the proud heathens trampled o'er Zion's sad daughter,
She wept tears of blood o'er her gulft and her woe,
For the voice of her God had commission'd the slaughter,
The rod of his vengeance had pointed the blow."

DALE.

Marianne. You have not told us any thing about Judah; who was king there?

Grandfather. Joash, whose life was saved by his aunt Jehosheba. She hid him when Athaliah, his grandmother, would have put him to death, at the time that she killed all the seed-royal. He was only one year old, and his aunt kept him six years in the house of the Lord. She was wife to the high priest.

Marianne. Was he a good king when he grew up?

Grandfather. He conducted himself wisely as long as Jehoiada, the high priest, lived, for he suffered himself to be directed by him; but when he died the king became wicked, and served false gods. To punish him, Hazael, king of Syria, came up against Judah. Crime makes

as cowardly; so Joash was afraid to meet Hazael in battle. He took all the holy things dedicated to the Lord by himself and by his fathers Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah; he took all the gold that was in the treasury of the Lord; he emptied the exchequer. This he sent to Hazael, who took it, and desisted at that time; but sent back his army the next year. He did not take the trouble to go himself, and he sent a very small army, for he despised the cowardly people of Judah. Joash had not another bribe to offer, so up marched the Syrians to Jerusalem. They killed the chief men, and carried to Damascus all the spoil on which they could lay their hands. The king of Judah was then in a diseased state of body. He might not have recovered, but he was not spared to try. Two of his own servants conspired against him, and put him to death. Such was the miserable end of a king who in his infancy had been so wonderfully preserved, and the early part of whose reign made so fair an appearance.

George. He was a very silly king.

Grandfather. The events of his reign shew us that as grace makes people great, so does wickedness make them weak.

Johnnie. Is there nothing more about Elisha?

Grandfather. Yes, I shall tell you something about him. He was a very old man: it was now sixty years since he was called to the office of a prophet. His race was nearly run. A sickness had come on him, which could only end in death. When Jehoash, king of Israel,

heard this, he was much distressed. He did not send to ask for the prophet: he went to him, and wept over him: "O my father, my father!" he cried, "the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!"

Johnnie. What did he mean by saying that?

Grandfather. He quoted the words that Elisha had used when Elijah was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire. By these words Jehoash meant that he looked on Elisha as the great support of the nation, and he could ill be spared at that time when the Israelites were so few and so feeble; when they had only fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen, for such at this time was the amount of their force, as I mentioned to you before. Elisha told the king to take bow and arrows, and to open the window towards the east, where the Syrians were encamped. Doubtless the king was far more accustomed to the use of a bow than the prophet; besides the one was young and strong—the other old and feeble. Yet Elisha put his hands on the hands of Jehoash, to shew the king of Israel that he ought not to trust in his own strength, but look heavenward for support. When the arrow was shot from the bow, Elisha said, "The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them." Then the prophet told the king to smite the arrows on the ground; thrice the king did so, and stopped. Perhaps he thought it childish, but that shewed want of faith; he looked only to the sign, and

not to the thing signified. Elisha was grieved, and said that he ought to have smitten often; then would he have smitten the Syrians till he had consumed them; now he would only smite them three times.

George. Then there would be a great deal of war in his reign; tell us about it.

Grandfather. Indeed, George, we are not told much about it. It is said only that he beat the Syrians three times, and took out of the hands of Benhadad, king of Syria, all the cities which Hazael his father had taken from the Israelites. But there was more war in his reign: a battle was fought between Israel and Judah. But before we enter upon it, we must see what the king of Judah was doing while the Israelites were defeating the Syrians. Amaziah, son of Joash, succeeded his father as king of Judah. The first act of his reign was an act of justice; he put to death the murderers of his father. Then he assembled all the people of Judah to go to war against the Edomites; and, not satisfied with his own people, he hired of the Israelites one hundred thousand men for one hundred talents of silver.

George. How much is that in our money?

Grandfather. About fifty thousand pounds sterling. A prophet came to the king and told him that it was not right to let the Israelites go with him, for God was not with them. Amaziah said, "But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel?" The man of God replied, "The

Lord is able to give thee much more than this." The king did as the prophet desired, and he was successful in his expedition. He smote the children of Seir in the valley of Salt.

Johnnie. Was that the name of the valley?

Grandfather. Yes; it was so called either from the salt springs that were in it, or from its salt mines. They took ten thousand of the Edomites prisoners, and put them to death, by throwing them from the top of the rock on which their chief city was built. Selah was the name of the city, which, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies rock, supposed to be the same with Petra, capital of Arabia Petræa.

Marianne. Threw them from the top of the rock, grandfather? That was cruel. I never heard of people being put to death in that way.

George. It was not cruel, for it would not be a very painful death, and it was very common. The Greeks did it, and the Romans cast malefactors from the Tarpeian rock.

Grandfather. And other nations besides have practised it, but we don't find that way of putting to death common among the Jews. Why they fixed on it at this time we are not told. Possibly it may have been in retaliation. The Edomites may at a former time have done it to them.

Johnnie. But, grandfather, did Amaziah give all the silver to the Israelites that he had promised them?

Grandfather. He did; but they took great offence at

not being suffered to accompany him to the war. They fell upon the cities of Judah, destroyed many of them, and took much spoil, to make up for what they had expected to get if they had gone against Edom.

George. The king would punish them for that when he came back?

Grandfather. He was not able to punish any one, for he had brought punishment on himself. He was so foolish as to take the gods of the Edomites home and worship them. The Lord was angry, and sent a prophet to rebuke him. The king was angry with the prophet for daring to do so, and threatened him. The prophet warned him of the evil that would come upon him. It soon came. The king entered into a sinful, because an unnecessary war. He sent a challenge to Jehoash, king of Israel. Jehoash returned an answer, comparing himself to a cedar, and Amaziah to a thistle. "Abide now at home," he said to the king of Judah; "why shouldst thou meddle to thine hurt, that thou shouldst fall, even thou and Judah with thee?"

George. How did he know who would win?

Grandfather. He knew who was to blame for the war; and his words teach us that if we are the beginners or promoters of strife, we meddle to our hurt. Amaziah persisted; the armies met. Josephus tells us that before the commencement of the battle the armies of Judah were seized with such terror that they were unable to strike a blow. As they were driven hither and thither by their fears, Amaziah was left alone, and was taken

prisoner. Jehoash threatened to put him to death unless he would persuade the people of Jerusalem to open their gates, and permit him and his army to enter the city. Neither the king nor the people dared to refuse what Jehoash asked. So he overthrew a part of the wall, four hundred cubits in length: through the breach he entered in his triumphal chariot,—his prisoner Amaziah marching beside. Nor was this all: Jehoash took away the treasures that were in the house of God, and all the gold and silver that was in the king's palace.

George. I could hardly have believed that the people of Judah, after being victorious against the Edomites, would have turned away without even trying to fight.

Grandfather. The Scripture only tells us that Judah was put to the worse before Israel, and that they fled every man to his tent.

Marianne. And is there nothing said in the Bible about breaking down the wall of Jerusalem, and taking away the treasures?

Grandfather. Yes, it gives the same account of these events as the Jewish historian does.

Johnnie. Did Amaziah fight any more?

Grandfather. We are not told that he did, but he lived for a good many years afterwards. A conspiracy was formed against him by two of his servants. He fled to Lachish to save his life, but they followed and killed him there. Such were the evils that came upon Amaziah, because he forsook the God of his fathers, and worshipped the strange gods of the Edomites.

George. And what became of Jehoash, the king of Israel? Was he killed by his servants too, for that seemed to be a common thing among these kings?

Grandfather. He died, and was succeeded by his son. He was called Jeroboam the Second. Like the first Jeroboam he was an idolater, yet it pleased the Lord to crown his arms with success. The God of Israel had looked in pity on His suffering people: He saw their affliction that it was very bitter. They were so much oppressed by the Syrians that they had nothing which they could call their own. They dared not go into the open country, and even in walled towns they were unsafe. So God delivered them out of the hand of their enemies by their king Jeroboam. He effectually subdued the Syrians, and took from that people all the cities which they had taken from the Israelites. We may learn from this that often when our distress is deepest, we are most sensible of the helpful hand of the Lord.

George. Was there any war going on in the kingdom of Judah at this time?

Grandfather. Uzziah or Azariah, who succeeded his father Amaziah, was a very active prince. He fought against the Philistines, broke down the walls of their chief cities, and built cities in their country for himself. Against the Arabians also he fought successfully. The Ammonites sought his favour by bringing him gifts, and his fame spread even to Egypt, for he was a very powerful king. No particulars are given of any of his wars,

but the reason of his success is told: "As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper. This teaches us that if we would win the favour of men, we must begin by seeking the favour of God. It would have been interesting to have known more of the reign of Uzziah. He kept his soldiers in good order—well disciplined and well armed. He built towers of defence in Jerusalem, and towers also he built in the wilderness to defend his herdsmen and vine-dressers from their enemies; he increased the number of his cattle, and employed many husbandmen, for he took much interest in the labours of the field. Mention is made in his reign of the making of engines to throw darts and stones from a besieged city upon its besiegers, and this is the first mention we have of such machines.

George. Did Uzziah invent them himself? He had had been a very clever man.

Grandfather. The Bible does not tell us that the king invented them, but that he made in Jerusalem engines invented by cunning men. But on account of them his fame spread far; so perhaps we may impute the honour of the invention to Uzziah himself.

Marianne. Uzziah had been a very good king, I think.

Grandfather. He was so in the first part of his reign, but when he grew famous he became proud, and transgressed against the Lord. He wished to burn incense in the temple, which is permitted to no one but the priests. They forbade him to do it, and while he was

quarrelling with them, he was smitten with leprosy. He continued a leper till the day of his death, confined to his house, and seen only by the priests. His subjects were fortunate in his son and successor, Jotham by name. He followed the example of his father so far as it was good: he avoided the evil that his father had done. He improved the state of the kingdom, and extended his power abroad. He fought against the children of Ammon, prevailed, and subjected them to tribute. They paid him yearly a hundred talents of silver, ten thousand measures of wheat, and the same of barley. In a very different state was the kingdom of Israel at this time; its brightest days had come to an end. The family of Jehu had many faults, yet they were the best kings that Israel had: the country was far from prosperous in their time, yet it was in the highest state of prosperity to which it ever attained. The Lord had promised to Jehu that his sons should sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation. And so it was. Zechariah, the fourth from Jehu, ascended the throne of Israel in the thirty-first year of Uzziah. For six months only he reigned, and he was the last of his race. A conspiracy was formed against him by Shallum, who publicly murdered him, and reigned in his stead. One full month the usurper reigned, when he was in his turn slain by Menahem, the general of the army. He laid waste the country round, marched to Tiphsah; the citizens shut their gates, he took

the city by storm, and barbarously slew all the people —men, women, and children.

Marianne. What a dreadfully cruel man he must have been; the Israelites were very ill off for a king.

Grandfather. While these things were going on within it, the kingdom of Israel made a poor figure to the neighbouring nations. Pul, the king of Assyria, thought this a good opportunity to invade it. He went thither accordingly. Menahem durst not venture to meet him in the field. Cruelty is not seldom united with cowardice; he was glad to buy peace. One thousand talents of silver was the sum he paid. He raised the money by laying a tax on the rich—fifty shekels of silver each. Here he shewed some consideration in sparing the poor, and taxing those only who were able to afford it.

George. How much would it be that they each paid in our money?

Grandfather. About six or seven pounds each; four hundred thousand pounds in all. The Assyrians left on receiving this valuable present; but getting so much wealth with so little trouble, tempted them to return soon; so he who should have protected his country betrayed it. In the fiftieth year of Uzziah, Pekahiah succeeded his father Menahem. Two years only was he suffered to enjoy the throne. Pekah, one of his captains, with fifty men of the Gileadites, conspired against him, and slew him in his palace. Pekah then

wore the crown. There was much war in his reign. Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, went into the land of Israel, and committed great havock there. He took possession of all the land of Gilead, which lay east of the Jordan, inhabited by the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half of Manasseh. He also subdued the land of Galilee, which is the north part of Canaan, inhabited by Naphtali and Zebulon. The cowardly people seem to have made no resistance, but suffered him to take their cities, and to carry themselves captive into Assyria.

George. Why did they not try to prevent him?

Grandfather. Because their defence was departed from them—the Lord was not on their side. So vast a multitude of people did he carry into captivity, that great part of that once flourishing country was waste, and without inhabitant. Instead of revenging these attacks, Pekah carried his arms into the land of Judah.

Marianne. He might have saved himself that trouble; surely so bad a king would be unsuccessful there?

Grandfather. Bad as he was, he was victorious there. In one day he slew a hundred and twenty thousand valiant men of Judah.

Marianne. Was the wise king Jotham not reigning?

Grandfather. No. He was dead, and his son Ahaz, a wicked and idolatrous prince, was on the throne. Judah had forsaken her God, therefore she was spoiled. Besides the number that fell by the sword, the army of Israel took captive two hundred thousand women and

children. When they were returning home with the captives and the spoil, they were met by the prophet Oded, who told them that it was not because they deserved the victory that they had got it, but because the Lord was angry with Judah. "And now," he said, "ye purposed to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem, for bondmen and bondwomen unto you, but are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God? Now hear me, therefore, and deliver the captives again which ye have taken captive of your brethren, for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you." The princes of Israel hearkened to the word of the prophet, and forbade the soldiers to keep the captives they had taken. They knew they had sins enough already to answer for. The armed men murmured not, but gave up the captives by whom they had expected to enrich themselves. They obeyed their conscience against their interest, and in that shewed greater heroism than in winning twenty battles.

George. I don't see that.

Grandfather. It is a far nobler triumph, my boy, to be able to conquer our own inclinations than to overcome those who are opposed to us.

Johnnie. Did they send the women and children home again?

Grandfather. They first fed and clothed them—then conveyed them as far as Jericho, provided asses for those who were unable for so long a journey on foot,

and they left them not till they were safely delivered to their own people. Let us imitate their example.

Marianne. But how can we imitate their example?

Grandfather. We do not need to go far to seek for the ignorant, the poor, and the erring. As we ask mercy for ourselves, let us shew mercy to others. Pekah, king of Israel, was not the only enemy who annoyed the king of Judah at this time. Rezin, king of Syria, smote him: the Edomites had carried some of the people into captivity, and the Philistines had taken possession of several cities and villages in the country of Judah, and dwelt in them themselves. Ahaz, instead of seeking help from God, sought it from the king of Assyria, and this unworthy descendant of David and Solomon called himself the servant and the son of that heathen monarch. But debasing himself was not enough: he knew that there was no use in asking a favor without paying for it, so he emptied the temple and the palace of the gold and silver that were in them, and sent a present to Tiglath-pileser. No objection was made by the king of Assyria to receiving the present, or to doing what was asked of him. He went up against the Syrians, took Damascus their capital, and slew Rezin their king. Yet Ahaz was not the better of him. Tiglath-pileser established himself, with his soldiers, in the land of Judah. They impoverished it—they were insolent to the king, and vexed him greatly. So this degenerate prince had little comfort in his allies. In the kingdom of Israel there were still worse doings.

Pekah, who by treason and murder ascended the throne, was in his turn supplanted by the same means. Hoshea seized the crown, and a comfortless crown he found it. Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, came up against him, and subjected him to tribute. For some time this lasted. But Hoshea, wearied of his servile state, neglected to pay his yearly tax, and sent to beg assistance from So, king of Egypt. When this came to the ears of Shalmaneser he was enraged; he marched into the land of Israel, and took the king prisoner. Samaria held out against him for three years: at the end of that time he took it, and carried into captivity all the inhabitants of the land of Israel. From thenceforward they ceased to be a nation.

Johnnie. Where did he take them?

Grandfather. In the land of Assyria there is a city and a province both named Halah; another city and province called Yozar. Between them flows the river Haber or Chebar, as Ezekiel calls it. There the captive Israelites were planted, and also in the cities of the Medes. We are not told the names of those cities; but historians say that the land of Media was peopled by colonies from abroad.

George. Why did he take them away?

Grandfather. He may have had many reasons, to shew his power over them perhaps; or, as they had rebelled once, it might be to prevent them rebelling again; or to break their spirit, by keeping them as bondmen; or to make room for his own people to settle in the land of

Israel. Whatever the motive of Shalmaneser was, the Lord used him as an instrument to punish the ten tribes for rebelling against him, and worshipping strange gods. Let us be warned by their fate. Within us is the same evil heart, apt to wander astray. Let us seek the assistance of the Spirit, that we may walk uprightly. Israel would not serve their God in the good land he had given them; justly were they made to serve his enemies in a strange land. If we prefer the service of sin to the service of God, he is just in giving us up to its power.

Johnnie. Did they ever get back again?

Grandfather. In the time of Ezra, a few returned with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; but from the day that they were carried away by Shalmaneser until now, the great bulk of them have been scattered among the nations, as the prophets had foretold.

Marianne. Where are they now?

Grandfather. That is not very well known. We hear of them in the time of the apostles. St Luke tells us of Parthians and Medes and Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Phrygia, Pamphylia, in Egypt, and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, Cretes and Arabians. These he calls Jews and proselytes. That means the descendants of Jacob, and those they had converted to their faith. James addresses his epistle to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, without naming the countries of their residence. Peter addresses his brethren as strangers scattered throughout

Pontus, Gallatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Whether by these are meant the whole of the ten tribes, or only those of them that returned to their own land in the days of Ezra, we cannot tell. Some people think that America was peopled by the ten tribes, but there does not seem much evidence to support that opinion. A recent traveller, Dr Grant, found a Christian people called Nestorians, living in the very countries whither the ten tribes had been carried. From many circumstances he was led to believe that they were descendants of Israel, and supposes them to be the lost tribes.

What are we taught by the answer of Jehoash to the challenge of Amaziah?

When the Lord saw that the affliction of the Israelites was very bitter, he sent them a deliverer,—What may we learn from this?

As long as Uzziah sought the Lord he was much esteemed; when he transgressed against God he was despised,—What does this teach us?

In obedience to the prophet Oded, the armed men of Israel shewed kindness to their captives, and set them free,—How can we imitate their example?

The fate of the ten tribes of Israel is a warning to us; like these people we have evil hearts,—What ought we to seek?

The Israelites would not serve God in the good land he had given them, therefore it was just that they should be made to serve their enemies in a strange land,—*How* may we apply this to ourselves?

THE FALL OF JUDAH.

"The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

"Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen;
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay wither'd and strewn.

"For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,
And breath'd on the face of the foe as he pass'd,
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heav'd and for ever grew still.

"And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there roll'd not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

"And there lay the rider, distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

"And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord."

BYRON.

NEXT evening, when we had taken our usual places, one of us—I do not recollect who it was—asked grand-

father how many years the ten tribes of Israel were governed by kings of their own.

Grandfather. For two hundred and fifty-four years. In the year of the world 3029 they revolted from the house of David, and chose Jeroboam for their king. In the year 3283 Shalmaneser carried them into captivity. He does not seem to have supplied the land with inhabitants in their place, at least it was thinly peopled until the time of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, who sent colonies there from different parts of his dominions. These colonists were idolatrous people. Some of them worshipped the sun, some worshipped the lower animals, or images in the shape of them; some had gods in the form of a pillar, and some in human likeness; others kept fire continually burning on their altars, to which they did homage. Vile deities these were, and vilely were they served. The poor ignorant people took their own children and burned them in the fire, and things even more abominable still they did in honour of their gods. Because of their wicked idolatrous practices, the Lord sent lions into Samaria, who killed some of them.

Marianne. Why did lions come among them? They did not know any better. The Israelites did know better, and no lions annoyed them, though they worshipped idols.

Grandfather. True, they did, but not like these people. They professed to regard the God of their fathers, though they did not worship Him as they ought.

The idols they looked on as something between them and Jehovah. These nations who now inhabited Samaria were entirely ignorant of the true God, and shewed their ignorance by speaking of Him as the God of the land. They sent to tell the king what a grievance the lions were to them—what terror they kept them in—and what havock they had done. They said that they knew these lions had come upon them because they knew not how to serve the God of the land. They wished the king to send a priest to teach them to worship him. Here was a people sunk in debasing idolatry seeking to be instructed in the truth. Let us learn from them to value the instruction with which we are favoured, and try to extend the knowledge of the true God to those who as yet know Him not. The king of Assyria, agreeably to the request of his people, sent a captive priest to teach the Samaritans to worship the God of Israel. They attended to the teaching, and did homage to the Lord, but not as to the one living and true God. They worshipped him along with their own false gods. It was long before their idolatry was entirely overthrown, but in the end it was so. Two hundred years after, the Samaritans no longer worshipped idols. Josephus tells us that when the Jews were prosperous these people claimed kindred with them, but they were careful to deny all connection with them when they were in a low state.

Marianne. That is very bad, if it is true. Are there any of these people now?

Grandfather. There are very few, only two or three hundred people: like the Jews, they worship in the synagogue every Sabbath day.

George. I have been expecting a battle. It is long in coming to-night.

Grandfather. We have come now to war. In the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, son of Ahaz and king of Judah, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against him, and took the walled towns. Hezekiah, in great fear, sent to offer to pay anything the king of Assyria might ask. Sennacherib demanded three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold, which is nearly two hundred thousand pounds in our money. To raise this large sum Hezekiah was obliged not only to take all the treasure out of the temple, but even to take the gold plates off the doors and the pillars.

Marianne. Then Hezekiah had been a bad man, when he stripped the temple of its gold.

Grandfather. He was not a bad man. He was one of the best kings that ever reigned in Judah. He purged the land of idolatry, and caused all the people to come up to Jerusalem to worship. The character given of him by the sacred historian is this—"He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him, for he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments which the Lord commanded Moses."

Marianne. Why then did he take the gold and silver

out of the temple, and why were the Assyrians allowed to come against him?

Grandfather. The gold that he had taken off the doors and pillars of the temple he himself had put on, and he would intend to restore it when the means were in his power. As to why the Assyrians were suffered to come against him, trouble, we know, sometimes comes on those who sincerely seek God, that their faith may be strengthened, and their hearts purified. Yet we may regard the invasion of the Assyrians as a punishment on the king of Judah, who, a short time before, had displeased the Lord by ostentation, of which you will read an account afterwards; and a punishment, too, on the people of Judah, who, though they were obliged outwardly to appear devoted to the true God, still loved idols in their hearts. The Assyrian who came against them was a rod in the hand of God to punish a hypocritical nation, as Isaiah tells us.

George. Well, did Sennacherib take the bribe and go away?

Grandfather. He took the bribe certainly, but he did not go away. Hezekiah made himself poorer, but not safer, by parting with his gold. Sennacherib sent a large army, under three of his generals, to complete the conquest of Judah. Hezekiah held a council, and it was agreed to prepare for defence. They repaired the walls of the city—made weapons of war, darts and shields, in abundance—enrolled the people—and instructed them in military operations. Besides, to annoy the

enemy, they stopped up the fountains all round. The three Assyrian generals advanced to Jerusalem, and called for Hezekiah to speak with them. He sent three of the chief men of the city to hear what they had to say, but charged them not to say anything in reply. Rabshakeh, Tartan, and Rabsaris were the names of the Assyrian officers. Rabshakeh was spokesman. He commanded them to surrender; he mocked at their weakness; said they had no soldiers among them, and need not trust for assistance from any other nation, for the great king of Assyria had conquered them all. He said, too, that he had a commission from God to destroy Jerusalem: "Am I now come up without the Lord against this place to destroy it? The Lord said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it." When the three rulers of Judah heard this, they feared lest it should make the people unwilling to resist the Assyrians. So they ventured mildly to remonstrate with Rabshakeh: "Speak, I pray thee," they said, "to thy servants in the Syrian language, for we understand it, and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall." Rabshakeh saw at once of what they were afraid, but it only made him bolder and more insolent. He continued to speak in the Hebrew tongue, and raised his voice, telling the people not to trust in their king, for he could not deliver them; neither to trust in their God, for he was as unable to deliver them from the power of the king of Assyria. The only way, he said, in which they could avoid death by starvation

was to give themselves up to him. Wherever the king of Assyria had fought before, he had conquered, and how could they expect to escape? "Hath any of the gods of the nations," exclaimed the blaspheming Assyrian, "delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath, Arphad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Henah, and Ivah? Have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? Who are they among all the gods of the countries that have delivered their country out of mine hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand?" The people made no reply, as the king had commanded, and the three commissioners returned to Hezekiah with their clothes rent in token of sorrow. When Hezekiah heard it, he also rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth. He went to the house of the Lord to seek comfort there, and sent to ask Isaiah the prophet how this trouble would end. While Hezekiah was praying, Isaiah was speaking words of comfort to the distressed people of Judah. He sent this message to the king—"Thus saith the Lord, be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

Johnnie. A blast upon him? What was that? What happened to the Assyrians?

Grandfather. You shall hear, but the troubles of Heze-

kiah had not yet ended. A letter came to him from Sennacherib no less insolent than the speech of Rabshakeh, and much to the same effect. When Hezekiah had read it, he went up to the house of the Lord, and spread it before his God.

Johnnie. Why did he do that, grandfather? God knew what was in the letter.

Grandfather. Certainly; but this action shewed that he acknowledged God in all his ways, and that he referred every thing to his disposal. We may learn from this, whenever any thing troubles us, to follow the example of pious Hezekiah, and spread it before the Lord. There, in the temple, the king of Judah prayed that the Lord would glorify His own name by defending His own people from an idolatrous nation. Again, when Hezekiah was praying, words of comfort were spoken. A message came from Isaiah, repeating the former assurance that the king of Judah had nothing to fear, and giving a fuller account of the workings of Providence in the wars of Sennacherib.

Johnnie. Did he tell what a blast meant?

Grandfather. No, that was not explained. To the king of Assyria this is said from the Almighty—"Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult is come up into my ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest." Of the king of Assyria this is said—"He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a

bank against it. By the way that he came by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord." That very night the prophecy was fulfilled. The Lord sent his angel, who smote one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the camp of the Assyrians. Next day the king of Assyria, with the remnant of his army, turned about and sought safety in their own land.

George. Is it not known what killed them?

Grandfather. It is not certainly known. Josephus calls it a plague, but the expression, "a blast," makes it seem more likely that it was by the *simoom*, a hot wind, which, when it enters the lungs, causes instant death.

George. I have heard of it. It blows on the sand in the Arabian desert. I read a story about two gentlemen who fell asleep at an open window in the middle of the day, and were found dead, their bodies being black as if they had been burned.

Johnnie. Was it the simoom that killed them? I would be afraid to sleep if I were in that country.

George. That would not save you. It often kills people when they are awake. Their only plan when they see it coming is to bury their mouths and noses in the sand.

Johnnie. They see it coming, do they? What like is it?

George. It is a purple colour in the sky; is it not, grandfather?

Grandfather. Mr Bruce calls it a coloured haze, like thin smoke, of a blueish shade. I read an account of

a sad catastrophe from this dreadful wind. On the 15th of April 1813 the caravan from Mecca to Aleppo entered the Arabian desert. There were merchants, travellers, pilgrims returning from visiting the shrine of their prophet at Mecca, and attendants, escorted by four hundred military,—two thousand people in all. Seven days they had travelled the desert; they were nearly across it, when on the twenty-third of the month, just as they had struck their tents and begun their march, a wind rose and blew with great fury. On they pushed as fast as they could, when suddenly the sky overcast, and dense clouds appeared. Too well the doomed travellers knew the fatal simoom. As they saw the blast of death come nearer, the piercing cries of men and beasts were heard; next moment there was the silence of death.

Marianne. How dreadful! Were they all killed?

Grandfather. The speed of the dromedaries saved some of them, but not more than twenty out of all the two thousand. Death is never far from us, and we do not know how near it may be.

Johnnie. That is a terrible, story, grandfather; but I would like to know what became of the great king whose army was killed by the blast.

Grandfather. The great king was killed himself by his two sons while he was worshipping in his idol temple.

Marianne. What wicked sons they must have been.

Grandfather. There is a story told which gives a reason for their extraordinary conduct. When Sennache-

rib got home he inquired why it was that the Jewish people were so greatly favoured by the Lord of heaven. He was told that to secure the favour of that powerful being, Abraham, the father of the Hebrews, had sacrificed his only son. "If that will do it," said Sennacherib, "I will spare him two of mine to win him over to my side." His two sons hearing this, resolved to save themselves by sacrificing him.

George. Was there any more war in Hezekiah's reign?

Grandfather. We are told that he smote the Philistines, but no particulars are given. He was unfortunate in his son and successor, Manasseh, who followed the abominable practices of the heathen nations around. The Lord was displeased, and sent against him the king of Assyria. The contemptible king of Judah, instead of trying to defend his people, tried to hide himself among thorns, where he was taken and carried captive to Babylon. As a punishment, this disgrace came on Manasseh, but it proved the greatest blessing of his life. It led him to think seriously, and then he knew that the Lord he is God.

Marianne. He must have known that before, he had so good a father.

Grandfather. Being taught a thing is different from feeling it. Manasseh had been instructed in the new religion, but his heart was unimpressed by it till he was humbled by sorrow. Then the prayers of his pious father were answered, and the benefits of his instruction and example were seen. The story of Manasseh ought

to make us ask ourselves, do we know the Lord? We have heard of him, as Manasseh did when he was young; but have we loved him, and sought to obey him, as Manasseh did not till he was old?

Marianne. Did he ever get back to his own land?

Grandfather. He did, and from that time till his death he served God, and did his duty to his subjects, trying to remedy the evil that the former part of his reign had done. The very little success which he had in that attempt shews us it is easier to lead people wrong than to lead them right.

Marianne. Did a good king reign after him?

Grandfather. He was succeeded by his son Amos, of whom we hear little, and what little we hear is not to his credit. He had reigned only two years when he was slain by his own servants. After him came the pious king Josiah, whose reign was the last bright spot in the darkening history of Judah. There was no war in his reign till the end of it, when it happened that Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt, led his armies to invade Assyria. Josiah hearing this, went out to oppose him. Pharaoh said he ought not to do that, for he had no intention of attacking him: it was against the king of Assyria he was going, and he had undertaken the expedition at the express command of God.

Johnnie. That was not true surely?

Grandfather. Yes, it was true, but Josiah heeded it not. He went out against Pharaoh, and fell in the battle: he was shot by the archers, and mortally

wounded. His subjects grieved much for his death, and they had cause to grieve.

Marianne. Was it not wrong of Josiah to persist in fighting against Pharaoh?

Grandfather. It was not right. Had he sought direction from God in this matter, he would have acted differently; yet it was in mercy that he was taken away; he did not live to see the evils that came upon his people soon afterwards.

George. What evil came upon them afterwards?

Grandfather. The king of Egypt had meant no ill to Josiah; yet because that king would not let him alone, so he would not let his successors alone. Jehoahaz, his son, succeeded, but only for three months did he sit on the tottering throne of his ancestors. Pharaoh-necho bound him, and carried him to Egypt, where he died. Short as was the reign of Jehoahaz, it was long enough to shew that his being dethroned was no loss to his subjects, nor was his brother Jehoiakim any better than he. The king of Egypt obliged him to pay tribute, which, with much trouble, he raised, and greatly impoverished his people. Nor was this all: Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up to Jerusalem, and made this fallen king his servant. For three years Jehoiakim paid tribute to him, then cast off his yoke, hoping, perhaps, that his former master, the king of Egypt, would assist him. Nebuchadnezzar was angry, and sent against him bands of the Chaldeans, bands of the Syrians, of the Moabites, and of the Ammonites. It is said in

Scripture that the Lord sent these against him,—shewing that God often punishes the iniquity of the people by permitting men to cause them trouble.

Johnnie. Why did the king of Egypt not help him?

Grandfather. He was unable, for Nebuchadnezzar had subdued the land of Egypt, and taken from Pharaoh great part of his dominions. After the death of Jehoiakim, when Jehoiachin, his son, was on the throne, Nebuchadnezzar went up to besiege Jerusalem. The feeble monarch, made feeble by his own sins, and by the sins of his fathers, was glad to submit to the powerful king of Babylon. He yielded without opposition. He, his mother, his servants, his princes, and his officers, left Jerusalem, and committed themselves to the mercy of Nebuchadnezzar. Thus ended the reign of Jehoiachin, after he, like his uncle Jehoahaz, had reigned only three months.

George. I think he might have stood out a while for his rights; it was very tame in him to submit so readily.

Grandfather. He fared the better on that account, however. His successor had good cause to repent his obstinacy.

Marianne. What was his name?

Grandfather. Mattaniah, but Nebuchadnezzar changed it to Zedekiah, to shew his absolute power over him; for though he was called the king of Judah, he was in reality the servant of the king of Babylon, and ought not to have attempted anything against his will; but he did

so,—he rebelled. Through the anger of the Lord this came to pass, that a wicked king and wicked people might suffer more than they had ever yet done. Nebuchadnezzar was not a monarch who could suffer his subjects to rebel with impunity. With all his army he came up and laid siege to the capital of Judea. Earnestly the prophet Jeremiah besought Zedekiah to submit. He foretold that continued rebellion would only produce aggravated sufferings, and could be no gain in the end. The prophet only brought trouble on himself by his advice: it had no effect on the rulers of the city.

Johnnie. What did they do to him?

Grandfather. They put him in a deep pit with mire at the bottom, and he sank up to his neck in the mire.

Johnnie. Surely he did not give them any more advice after that?

Grandfather. His persecution did not prevent him from delivering his message. He had the words of his Heavenly Master to say, and he spoke them boldly. His example teaches us to do our duty regardless of consequences.

George. What became of Zedekiah in the end?

Grandfather. The siege of Jerusalem lasted for nearly two years. After almost incredible sufferings from famine, the city was taken by storm. The king and the chief people escaped by flight. As soon as the Babylonish army knew that the king had fled, some of them set off in pursuit of him. He was soon taken and led before Nebuchadnezzar, who was then at

Riblah, a town between Jerusalem and Babylon. There the last sight that met the eyes of the captive monarch was the slaughter of his children ; and, as if to keep that doleful spectacle ever before his mind, his own eyes were put out, and he was taken prisoner to Babylon, where he died. Thus were the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel fulfilled. The former of these foretold that Zedekiah was to be taken to Babylon, and the second, that he should never see that city, and so it was. This is the end of the history of the kingdom of Judah. The people would not obey God,—they would not hearken to his servants the prophets,—therefore they were subjected to the power of a strange king. Let us take warning by their fate. Let us hear and obey while our day of favour lasts.

We then read the account of Hezekiah's sin, and the prophet's rebuke of it, related in the thirty-ninth chapter of Isaiah ; and grandfather remarked that it shewed us the folly of having our treasure on this earth, and how often it is that worldly riches are a temptation and a snare,—a curse instead of a blessing to the possessor.

The heathen nations who inhabited Samaria sought to be instructed in the truth,—What may we learn from their example ?

What did Hezekiah do that was wrong ?

What in the conduct of his subjects was deserving of punishment ?

Hezekiah spread the letter of Sennacherib before the

Lord, to shew that he acknowledged God in all his ways, and that he referred everything to his disposal,—What may we learn from this?

How can we apply to ourselves the story of Manasseh?

The subjects of Manasseh willingly suffered him to lead them wrong; but they were backward when he sought to lead them to what was good,—What are we shewn by this?

THE CONCLUSION.

Not much more have I to tell of our visit to grandfather. Two days after his stories of the battles were ended our father came to take us home. Sorry we all were to leave—very sorry. That cottage and garden looked pretty always, but never prettier than when we were saying good bye to everything that was there. It was the evening after my father came—we were to leave the next day, and I had been in the garden watering the flowers for the last time. When I came in it was bedtime, and I went to say good night to grandfather. I thought he looked sadder than usual; he put his hand on my head, and said, "Marianne, remember your prayers." Tears started to my eyes, for I knew that many and many a night I had retired to rest without remembering them, or at least without remembering them as I ought. Often since, when I have been tempted to foolish trifling thoughts at my latest waking hours, the thought has entered my mind, the soothing, hallowing thought of my dear grandfather. I have fancied I felt the gentle touch of his hand on my head, and heard his kind voice saying, "Marianne, remember your prayers."

Like a spell this thought would drive far from me all worldly imaginations, and I could feel only humility for my own unworthiness, and thankfulness that I had been blessed with so pious a grandfather. To know him was a real blessing to me, and it is the hope that hearing of him may benefit some one, which has led me to dwell upon him here. But having finished the stories of the battles which he told us, I need not weary those who have read thus far by telling them of myself. I shall now say adieu to those, whoever they may be; and lest they should think I have praised my grandfather too highly, I shall speak no more of him, but beseech them to be followers of no one man, however pious, and diligently to walk in the footsteps of their Heavenly Master.

THE END.

Just Published, in Foolscap Octavo, Cloth, Price 3s. 6d.; or Cloth, Gilt Edges, Price 4s.,

CHAPTERS ON THE SHORTER CATECHISM.

BY A CLERGYMAN'S DAUGHTER.

SECOND EDITION.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

From the Edinburgh Courant.

"The object of the volume before us is to render the Shorter Catechism intelligible and attractive to children, and to impress upon their minds the important truths which it contains. The authoress, in a very modest preface, states that Mrs Sherwood's 'Stories on the Church Catechism' suggested to her the idea of the work, and we can say that she has accomplished it with much success. The story which forms the connecting link throughout is an account of a minister's family during a year. Each chapter is headed by one or more questions of the Catechism, and is devoted to the particular subject to which the questions relate. Besides the general story, which is made in a very natural way to accommodate itself to the various subjects, there are frequent conversations, in which the question is fully explained, and short anecdotes are introduced to impress it on the mind of a child. The whole is written in a very plain and simple style, and is pervaded by a spirit of deep earnestness and piety: it cannot fail to win the attention of those for whom it is designed. There is one passage, towards the end of the volume, in which the death of a little boy is described in as touching a strain as anything we have met with for a long time back. We cordially recommend the book to parents and other instructors of youth who desire to have their children trained up according to the principles of the Shorter Catechism. They will find it a very valuable assistant, and will have cause to thank the authoress for creating a pleasure and an interest in a task which at present is too often very wearisome."

From the Edinburgh Advertiser.

"The design is praiseworthy, and the manner in which the task has been performed is creditable to the young lady's talents and piety."

From the Caledonian Mercury.

"A tale admirably adapted to attract the youthful mind, and illustrates the commands and doctrines set forth in the Shorter Catechism."

From the Scottish Press.

"The authoress tells us in a brief and exceedingly well written preface, the only fault of which (if there is any at all) is its modesty, that Mrs Sherwood's 'Stories of the Church Catechism' suggested the idea of this work. We commend most highly the good intentions of the authoress, who displays no ordinary amount of ability in the treatment of a subject which, we doubt not, is much more difficult than at first sight it appears to be. Several passages of her simple tale give evidence of an accomplished mind, and an amiable character; and we consider it very appropriate as a gift book for young persons, at once of an interesting and instructive kind."

From the Glasgow Constitutional.

"The writer has made what we consider a successful attempt to render attractive that deservedly popular manual the Assembly's Shorter Catechism. The plan is simple; the children of a clergyman serve as *dramatis personæ*, and the 'questions,' in a moral and religious sense, are brought out, sometimes in the course of regular training, and sometimes accidentally,—objects or events in the diurnal walks of the family furnishing groundwork of instruction. No young person can peruse the work without amusement and instruction; indeed, it is calculated to please and edify at any age."

From the Aberdeen Journal.

"The publication before us refers to the practical bearing, on every-day life, of the doctrines contained and unfolded in the Catechism; making each chapter a practical illustration of the passages by which it is headed. It is written in a very simple style, suitable to its object—the explaining and impressing more fully on the minds of children the meaning, spirit, and bearing of their early lessons. It is a most useful publication, and we sincerely wish it all the success that the design deserves."

From the Montrose Review.

"The title of this work bears that it is 'A Tale for the Instruction of Youth,' suggested by a similar publication by Mrs Sherwood. The truths of the Gospel being illustrated in a very captivating manner, we think the authoress has succeeded admirably in her proposed object. The Tales, in various instances, present passages which may be pronounced both 'sublime and beautiful,' winning and pathetic. The *morale* of the whole is excellent —the sentiments being strictly in accordance with evangelical doctrine."

From the Montrose Standard.

"The authoress of this unpretending little volume, in a preface not less remarkable for its brevity than for its modesty, states, that the pleasure and advantage she had derived from reading Mrs Sherwood's 'Stories on the Church Catechism' first suggested to her the idea of writing a work of the same character. Before sitting down to examine the work, we thought within ourselves that the authoress had taken in hand a task of no mean difficulty, for, although our schoolboy prejudices to the Shorter Catechism have long ago melted away into a profound admiration of the fulness, the conciseness, and the beauty of this admirable compendium of faith, still we thought that as long as boys are boys, and till the *palmy* days of their existence has passed, the same prejudices, and the same *horror*, we may say, of the Shorter Catechism would continue; and that any one who could succeed in rendering such a subject interesting to children, must be 'a friend indeed,'—one destined to receive the blessing of every child in Scotland who carries a satchel. With such reflections we opened 'Chapters on the Shorter Catechism,' and began to read. The explanations were so simple and clear—the descriptions of scenery so natural—the delineations of character so truthful—the tales so interesting—and the moral precepts inculcated in language so pleasing and affectionate—in fact, as a woman only can—that when we laid down the volume, we were surprised to find that we had almost read it through. The plan of the volume is simple. We are introduced to the manse of a country clergyman—a model clergyman, blessed with a wife ever solicitous about the best interests of her family. The children, too, if they are not what they *ought* to be, are at least everything that children can be expected to be. One or more of the questions of the Shorter Catechism are prefixed to each chapter, and the incidents of every-day life are so managed as to turn the conversation upon the particular question or questions prefixed. This, we suspect, must have been a task of considerable difficulty to our authoress, but it is one she has fully surmounted. The volume only requires to be known to become a favourite in every family. Parents, Sunday-school teachers, and every one interested in the young—and who is not?—will receive hints which will be of great service to them—they will at least see how the most trifling circumstances may be made subservient to the high and holy purpose of pointing the way to heaven."

From the Greenock Advertiser.

"The very valid objections to what are called 'religious novels,' cannot be urged against this work, as it can lay no claim to the character of belonging to imaginative literature. These Chapters on the Catechism ought to prove exceedingly useful in inducing the young, not only without effort or repugnance, but with feelings of interest, to acquire a competent knowledge of the

great doctrinal points discussed and enforced. The work would form excellent reading in the family on Sabbath evenings, as its pages would not only interest young people, but impress on their memories the important truths taught in the Shorter Catechism,—a work whose influence in spreading among Scotsmen a thorough knowledge of divine truth can never be overestimated."

From the Fifeshire Journal.

" 'The Clergyman's Daughter' has given the world a very beautiful book. The tale, or rather the many tales and conversations, which are made the commentary on the Shorter Catechism, are related with infinite and uniform grace and ease, and they are such as must be highly interesting to young people, for whom the work is intended. The fair author excels, where excellence is rare, in the art of simple narrative. Her language is a beautiful specimen of chaste and noble diction, without affectation and without ambition. Dip into the work where you like, and you unfailingly dip into a 'well of English undefiled,' indicative of the finely regulated mind of the writer. She will stand a comparison with Swift or Cobbett, but she resembles neither of them. She is more like to Southey, but she has imitated nobody, and her own style, like all fine styles, is inimitable and indescribable—its Saxon richness being, of course, its chief ornament."

From the Scottish Sabbath School Teachers' Magazine.

" This is an illustrated explanation of the Shorter Catechism on the principle of Mrs Sherwood's 'Stories on the Church Catechism.' It is a tale, the incidents of which are arranged in such a manner as to illustrate in succession the various doctrines of the Shorter Catechism. This was not an easy task, and yet the Authoress has been upon the whole very successful. She has displayed much good taste and ingenuity, and at the same time brought out in story the various points with much fulness and correctness. The book is fitted to be very useful to teachers, but more particularly, we should think, to parents in the instruction of their children. We gladly recommend this volume to the attention of our readers."

From the Evangelical Christendom.

" The idea of this volume was taken from Mrs Sherwood's 'Stories on the Church Catechism,' and the manner in which the work is accomplished is highly creditable to the talents of the writer. If it be her first attempt, as from the preface we infer that it is, we use no flattery when we express our conviction that it ought not to be, and our hope that it will not be, her last."

BOUND BY
JOHN CRAY
EDINBURGH